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SECTION I.

IN THE FORM OF A

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OF THE

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AS THE SAME EXISTED

IN THE YEAR

1831

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IN SENATE, JANUARY 1832.

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1832.



**SERMONS,**  
**ON THE FOUR MARKS OF THE**  
**Church,**

BY THE  
**REV. JOHN FLETCHER, D. D.**

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FROM THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

**VOL. II.**

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**Baltimore:**  
PUBLISHED BY JAMES MYERS, NEAR THE CATHEDRAL.

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PRINTED BY WILLIAM A. FRANCIS,

*No. 173 Market Street.*

**1830.**

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OF THE FOUR PARTS OF THE

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BY JOHN LUTHER, D. D.

FROM THE FIRST ENGLISH EDITION

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VOL. II

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE AUTHOR.

## SERMONS.

### SERMON III.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

ON THE HOLINESS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*My little children, let us love, not in words, nor in tongue; but in deed, and in truth.—1st St. John, iii. 18.*

DID love consist in the professions of love, or benevolence in the expressions of philanthropy, then would the virtues of love and benevolence be extremely common—common almost, as they were, during the most fervent periods of the christian institute. The multitudes, who love thus, are countless. They crowd the paths of life, and fill all the avenues of society.

But, very different from these are the features of genuine love, and of real benevolence; and very different, of course, from the above, are the characters of the men, whom genuine love and real benevolence inspire. The love and benevolence, which Jesus brought down from heaven, and which are the models of the love and benevolence, with which men should mutually regard and assist each other, do not consist in profes-

sions, and expressions. These, while they in general cost nothing, very frequently conceal a very uncharitable disposition; and are the proofs, sometimes, of the absence of the virtues, which they artfully, affect to revere. The love and benevolence, which alone are genuine,—which are pleasing to God and beneficial to man, are those, which “*love in deed, and in truth;*”—that is, as the apostle illustrates these words—which seeing a brother in distress, open to him the bowels of compassion, and relieve him:—which even, in imitation of the charity of our beneficent Redeemer, are willing to sacrifice life itself, for the happiness “*of the brethren.*” Real love and benevolence are animated and active.

And, my brethren, what is here inculcated by St. John, respecting the nature of love and benevolence, might, just in like manner, be inculcated respecting the nature of every other pious disposition;—or to speak more correctly—the same kind of distinction, which St. John makes between real and fictitious love, might be accurately applied to the ascertainment of every other virtue, which tends to our sanctification. Every virtue, like love, must be animated and active—not confining itself to the coldness of professions, but displayed itself in the generosity of exertions. The essence of virtue is action. And, since christian virtue, above all, consists in the imitation of the most perfect model;—since it aspires to the attainment of of an immortal recompense, therefore must its action



be vigorous and energetic. "*By their fruits*, says Christ Jesus, speaking of his followers—*by their fruits, you shall know them.*" These, no doubt, best reflect back his sacred life; are the best proofs of virtue; and the sole claims to great rewards.

But, if adopting these notions of virtue, we cast a look around us, in order to discover how well, or where, they are realized, on the theatre of life,—alas! how melancholy a scene presents itself to the imagination; and how forcibly calculated to prove, that if indeed, there be many, who love virtue "*in words, and in tongue,*" there are few, who love it, "*in deed, and in truth.*" The great herd of society are, manifestly, the victims of passion, of self-love, and of ignorance; and under the influences of these evils, they neither rightly appreciate the nature of virtue, nor, of course, rightly cultivate its obligations. Under the control of *passion*, you find, that multitudes call any thing virtue, that is not absolutely vice; and, that, often, even to vice itself, they give the same insulted appellation—provided it be united to a few good and amiable qualifications. Under the guidance of *self-love*, you remark, that many, who profess, and who indeed possess, a warm esteem for piety, reduce its practice to a system of tepidity, that is not painful even to the softness of their sensuality. Under the direction of *ignorance*, you trace the formidable hosts of fanaticism, bigotry and error. To these—so thick are their ranks,—this island would seem peculiarly congenial. Among

these, although you hear men for ever vociferating the language of religion--although even, to judge from their professions, the ardor for religion would appear to have superseded, almost, every other sentiment--yet, do you find little of real piety, but the name--the cant and phraseology of religion, without the substance. They love virtue, "*in words and in tongue.*"

Not, my brethren, that I mean to insinuate, that virtue no longer subsists in the walks of life; or that the spirit of genuine sanctity is extinguished in the breasts of the professors of christianity. No, thanks to the good Shepherd, whose vigilance is fixed always upon his fold!--these, notwithstanding all the power of passion, of self love and of ignorance--these still subsist; they still adorn the lives of an immense portion of the christian world; and united to purity of belief, point out to the impartial mind that divine establishment, which was reared by the hands of our great Redeemer--distinguishing it clearly from all those spurious institutions, which passion and heresy have erected. This latter circumstance, fortunately, is one of those important truths, which not even the boldness of heresy has ventured to contest. There are few, either among the ancient or the modern heresies, which do not allow, that, as the church of Christ was destined to subsist through the lapse of time, and to subsist recommended by these characteristics, which, distinguish it from the fabrics of error--so it always has subsisted, and always will subsist, recommended by its *holiness*--for holiness, amid its various features,



---they own it,---has been appointed by the eternal wisdom to be one of the most conspicuous attestations of its divinity.

Virtue, therefore, exists still "*in deed and in truth*;" and amid the multifarious religious institutions, which crowd society, there exists still *one*, which is distinguished, and may be discovered, by the peculiarity of its *holiness*.—But here, an individual less blessed with the knowledge of the truth, than you are, would, perhaps, interrupt me to inquire,—which is this peculiarly favoured institution; or what the methods by which its happy peculiarity may be ascertained?—My brethren, important questions! The multitude of institutions, which assert, that they are, each of them, thus peculiarly favoured—or which lay claim to this happy peculiarity, is numberless. In reality, every institution, which calls itself a church, lays claim,—and must lay claim to it. It is, therefore, in order to discuss these claims, that, to-day, we are met together. We are met together, in order to contemplate the features of *holiness*, as they stand forward in the catholic, and the reformed establishments;—to compare them, and from the contemplation and comparison, to deduce the wise and interesting conclusion, which is divine, which human; which the church of Jesus Christ, which the edifice of human policy. To do this, I shall pursue the same process which I adopted in my discourse, last Sunday;—lay down, perspicuously, what is generally allowed to constitute the

characteristic which I am discussing, and then applied it alternately to the catholic and the reformed societies. The method is the most simple, and the most obvious, which reason could suggest;—calculated to ascertain the beam of truth; and in its result, to inspire piety with secure conviction.

To-day, I shall investigate the claims which the catholic church presents to the characteristic of holiness. In my next discourse, I shall examine those of protestantism. And here, my brethren, let not prejudice suspect,—still more, let it not conclude,—that, because a catholic minister discusses the claims of catholicity,—therefore, partiality will guide his judgment, or prepossession direct his conclusions. Dear to me, as is the church, which I revere, yet is not the affection, which I bear it, founded, I flatter myself, upon partiality; nor will partiality, if I know myself, induce me to suggest one maxim; to assert one fact; to draw one inference; which have not the evidence of truth for their authority. Indeed, whether I discuss the claims of catholicity, or those of protestantism, it is my intention to appeal to no maxims but such as are generally admitted; to state no facts but such as are well authenticated; to draw no inference but such as is the obvious result of these admitted maxims, and authenticated facts. So that, were it even true, that I am partial to my own religion, yet, would not my partiality, thus regulated and restricted, be unfaithful and unjust. A catholic, my brethren, in this country,

and in these times, can hardly have any motive to render him partial to catholicity, but the evidence of its divinity.

I. I have already remarked, that, as the perpetual stability of the true church is admitted by the generality of the reformed societies, so they, also, admit, as its essential appendage, the perpetual permanency of its *holiness*. The acknowledgment of the former position involves, naturally, the admission of the latter.—However, since it may happen, that some of the members of these societies may not allow what the societies themselves have sanctioned, I will, in few words, place before your reason, one or two of the many proofs, which evince, that *holiness* is—and is always, destined to be one of the distinguishing features of the church of Jesus Christ.

Whoever, merely reflects on the character of the Being, by whose hands the fabric of the church was reared, and on the motives, which prompted him to rear it, will, at once, feel, that *holiness*, above every other feature, should mark its excellence, and point out its divinity. The Being, who reared the church, is holiness itself; and holiness united with every other attribute, which constitutes perfection. The motive, which induced him to rear it, was the establishment of holiness among mankind. Hence, in the prophecies, which foretel the institution of the church; in the figures, which describe its properties; in the promise, which confirm its greatness,—it is depicted, while



beautiful in every thing—beautiful most, in the loveliness of its holiness. “*God will create, say the prophets, new heavens and a new earth, which he will sanctify with his own spirit, and brighten by the light of his countenance. Virtue shall be the basis of his throne, and holiness shall follow in his footsteps. His reign shall be the price of his blood; and of this reign, there shall be no end.*”—The apostles, like the prophets, with peculiar grace of imagery, describe the church’s holiness. “*Christ, says St. Paul, loved the church, and delivered himself for it, in order to sanctify it;—in order, that he might present it to himself glorious; not having any spot, or wrinkle; or any such thing.*” (Eph. v.) And, St. Peter speaking of its members, calls them “*a chosen generation; a holy nation; a purchased people.*” (i Eph. i. 9.)

Neither—as you may have collected from the passages, which I have cited—was this feature of holiness in the church of Christ designed to be only transient,—designed to be conspicuous, only while the apostles erected the sacred edifice, or while the martyrs cemented its foundations with their blood. It was destined to be perpetual and immortal, like the church itself. “*My spirit,*” says its divine founder to the apostles—“*my spirit, which is essentially a spirit of holiness—shall remain with you, all days, to the end of the world.*” (Mat. xxviii.) Not the efforts of human malice; not the storms of vice; no, *not the gates of hell itself*, he emphatically assured them, *shall ever*

*prevail against the church.* (Matt. xvi.) Formed for the sanctification of mankind, till the end of time, it must, consequently, till the end of time, continue, always, holy,—the parent and the nurse of the holiness of its children. It is, indeed, for this reason, that—not alluding to any determinate period, but referring to every period,—Christ Jesus has ordained, under the most awful comminations, that men shall, always, submit to its authority. “*If any one,*” he says, “*will not hear the church, let him be as the heathen, or the publican;*”—an injunction this, which, if the church were not destined to be always holy, would be both improper and profane. For, in that case, so far from saying, “*let him be reputed as a heathen, and condemned as a publican, who refuses to obey the church;*”—he should have said, *let these crimes and this disgrace be HIS, who respects its authority, and obeys its orders.* If the church be not holy, then it is wrong to obey it. However, all this, as I have remarked, is admitted. The true church, even the adversaries of the catholic church allow it, has been always, and still is, holy: and hence, do all, in every age, repeat, and in each succeeding age, will continue to repeat, those words of the apostle’s creed—“*I believe in the HOLY catholic church.*”

II. But, what—it is here the place to inquire—are the objects, or the circumstances, which constitute the characteristic of the holiness of the church? Fortunately, the answer to this question is easy. The



points, which make up the characteristic, are obvious—so obvious, as to be universally agreed on. Their selection, indeed, could hardly be the matter of discussion. They are, the means and the mode of the *establishment* of the church; the nature of its *doctrines*; the tendency of its *practices*; and the character of its *members*. These are, certainly, the plainest criterions that reason can suggest, either to ascertain the divinity of any institution, or to appreciate its claims to the public veneration.

That the establishment of the true church should be distinguished by traits of holiness, is a proposition, of itself, evident and incontestible. It would be absurd to imagine, that the God of Holiness, introducing the law of holiness, for the salvation of his creatures, would employ means for its propagation, that were not holy; or agents for its promulgation, that were not estimable for their piety. In the establishment of a system of holiness, it is evident, that all should be holy—the means; the men; the plan; the execution; the effects:—particularly, too, if it come,—as here, we suppose, it does—to supersede every other institution, and to render null every other form of worship. In this case, it should be ushered into notice, hung round with such attestations of its divinity, or superior excellence, that not only wisdom, but simplicity itself, could not mistake them.

And, are such the features of holiness, that marked the *establishment* of the catholic church? My breth-

ren, we know of no other establishment of the catholic church, than that, which, under the authority of our Great Legislator, was conducted by the apostles. Their's were the hands that laid its foundations;—their's, the industry, that raised its superstructure.—The voice of history; the attestations of innumerable writers; above all, the uninterrupted succession of our *pastors*, prove this. *These* form a chain, which, reaching through the lapse of ages up to the introduction of christianity, presents no other founders of our church, but the immediate envoys of Jesus Christ.—Indeed, even the silence of our adversaries evinces this:—for, interested as they are to discover and point out any other authors of our establishment—neither their learning, their ingenuity, nor their malevolence, have, with the slightest semblance of probability, been able to effect it.

What, therefore, the features were which distinguished the *establishment* of our religion, it would be here superfluous to describe. You all know the history of the lives of the apostles and their associates in the sacred ministry;—their piety, their innocence, their mortification, and their sufferings. You know the methods by which they propagated the law of truth; the arguments by which they recommended it to the public veneration; and the fruits which grew from its adoption. Every thing corresponded to the holiness of its author, and to the holiness of the object

which it was destined to promote. The *establishment* of the catholic church was holy.

But, it is true, that although the annals of time present no other period of the establishment of the catholic church, but the era of the apostles, yet, does the hostility of some of our dissenting brethren contest it; and without one proof to support the absurdity, boldly affect to distinguish between the establishment of christianity, and that of catholicity. As if,—did such distinction exist, and the establishment of catholicity were subsequent to that of christianity,—such distinction could not be proved; and the introduction of catholicity like that of arianism, or protestantism, be clearly pointed out. The men, who make this distinction, are of that class of unwise logicians, who prefer the darkest negative arguments to the clearest positive proofs.

Passing over, then, the first establishment of catholicity, as it was conducted by the first apostles, let me invite you to contemplate, a few moments, its establishment, as, on subsequent occasions, it has been conducted by the successors of those holy men, on the occasions, that is, of the conversion of pagan nations.—If, on the occasion of the conversion of any pagan nation to the doctrines of catholicity, you consult the accounts of the methods, by which the holy work was carried on, you will trace in them always the same features of holiness, which characterized the conduct and the successes of the first apostles. On every oc-



casion, you will remark *men*—ecclesiastics—lawfully deputed, presenting in the purity of their lives, the model of the virtues, which they were labouring to establish:—*means* congenial to the characters of the men, and to the spirit of religion—fervour united to mortification, and zeal recommended by humility:—*effects*, such as should naturally result from the agency of such means, directed under the agency of such men—every virtue flourishing, where every vice had grown before.

But, since these are general assertions, which may not convince the enemies of our religion, let me exhibit to you the portrait, or an etching rather, of *one* of these occasions of the establishment of catholicity, in a pagan nation. I will exhibit to you, as the most interesting to you and to me, the etching of its establishment in this nation;—and, that partiality may not appear to guide my pencil, I will exhibit it, as it has been given by the hands of our protestant countrymen. As given even by them, it affords striking proof of what I have asserted is the fact—that the establishment of catholicity has been always stamped with the proofs of holiness.

Above twelve hundred years ago, and above nine hundred years before the introduction of protestantism, Augustine, with his companions, brought the light of faith into this island. They derived their commission from the great and only acknowledged source of spiritual authority:—and in their faith and communion,

they were united with every orthodox community of the christian universe. Their faith, my brethren, was the same which you and I adore, at present.\* In their private and public characters, they were men eminent for their virtues, practising not only the precepts, but the counsels of the gospel; despising all earthly satisfactions; and attentive only to their own, and to the salvation of their neighbours. Their employments, when not engaged in the active occupations of their ministry, were prayer, watching, penance and mortification.† As for their conduct in the sacred ministry it was such as became apostles—men deputed by the command of heaven to convey the blessings of the gospel to pagan nations. They preached and acted,

\* "What," says Dr. Humphreys, "did Gregory and Augustine bring into England? Purgatory, the offering of the wholesome sacrifice, and prayers for the dead, relics, transubstantiation, &c. . . . popery, and the rest of the confused heap of popish superstitions. These things Augustine, a great monk, taught by Gregory, a monk, imported into England."—Jesuitism, p. 2.

"Augustine," says Bishop Bale, "was sent to season the English Saxons with the popish faith."—Cent. 1.

See also Dr. Fulk, Confutation of Purgatory; Harrison, Description of Britain; Willet, Tetrastylon Papismi; the Centuriators *passim*; and nearly the whole of our historians.

† "Having obtained," says the venerable Bede, "a residence, they began to imitate the mode of life that was followed by the early christians. They devoted themselves to prayer, to watching, fasting and preaching. Despising all worldly things, they received only what was necessary for their subsistence. They acted up to



as did once the first envoys of Jesus Christ. Fired with the love of God, and animated with charity to their fellow-men, they joined the ardor of zeal to the tenderness of benevolence. They gained proselytes, and attracted followers, not by exciting commotions; not by the disingenuous arts of misrepresentation and invective;—they gained proselytes, but it was by the eloquence of truth, assisted by the eloquence of meekness, humility and piety;—verifying in the whole series of their conduct, that pleasing sentence of the prophet, *“How beautiful on the hills are the footsteps of those who bring glad tidings.”*

Neither were the exertions of their charity unattended by the approbation of heaven. Not only cotemporary historians attest, but several protestant writers allow, that God rewarded them with the gift of miracles. Even the fierce enemy of every thing that is catholic—the martyrologist Fox, admits this fact—a fact which confirms both the holiness of the lives of these apostles; the lawfulness of their mission—and by a most logical inference, the truth of the holy religion, which they were labouring to establish.

*“The king, says Fox, considered the “honest conversa-*

the rule which they preached, disposed always to endure any hardships, or to sacrifice even their lives, in the defence of the true religion. Such was the innocence of their conduct, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine, that many believed and were baptized.” See also Fox, Hollinshed, &c.

*tion of their lives; and was moved with the MIRACLES wrought through God's hand by them."* (Acts and Mon. Col. 2.)\*

Under the influence of the sanction of such authority, united to the influence of the methods by which these holy men propagated the maxims of religion, it is easy to imagine what would be the fruits and effects which resulted from them. The fruits and effects were striking—such precisely, as that zeal is calculated to produce, which is blessed by the approbation of heaven. A people hitherto rude, savage, barbarous and immoral was changed into a nation, mild, benevolent, humane and holy. *"Every thing, says Collier, brightened, as if nature had been melted down and re-coined."*

And, my brethren, should curiosity investigate the circumstance similar to the above portrait of the establishment of catholicity in this country, it will find the portrait of its establishment in every other nation, at every period from its first introduction down to the present age;—for at every period, down even to the present, there have been, and still are, men, who, animated by the sublime impulses of charity, have devoted, and still devote, their industry and their lives, to

\* Collier, after noticing the difficulties which Augustine and his companions had to encounter, add—"Notwithstanding these seeming impossibilities, they were blessed with surprising success. The sanctity of their lives, and the force of their *miracles*, broke through the difficulty of the enterprise." Pref. to Eccl. Hist.

carry the light of catholicity into the shades of infidelity. On all these occasions, there have been repeated, and are renewed those scenes of holiness, which were exhibited in the conversion of this island. It was so, during the more early ages, in the conversion of France, Germany, &c.:—so, during the more recent ages, in the propagation of our religion in Japan, America, &c.:—so, during our own days, in the catholic missions of China, the Levant, &c.\* Holiness, has ever, and every where, marked the propagation of catholicity.

III. The second feature which I have noticed, as constituting a part of the characteristic of the holiness of the true church, is its *doctrines*. This proposition is evident as that, which I have been endeavouring to establish. The doctrines of the true church are divine, consequently they are holy. They are holy, and designed to be the principles of holiness among mankind. Indeed, no absurdity could be more palpable, than that which should imagine, that what infinite perfection had revealed,—and revealed for our sanctification,—should not be essentially holy.

It is therefore evident, that the doctrines of the true church are holy. But—here is the question—are the doctrines of the catholic church of this description? My brethren, let us again, conducted by the light of wisdom and impartiality, make the important investigation.

\* See Lettres Edificantes.



The code of doctrines which the catholic church professes and reveres, includes the moral precepts of the law of nature, the moral precepts and evangelical counsels of Jesus Christ, and the mysterious truths which this Great Legislator has communicated to his followers. These, indeed, are the objects which constitute the code that every christian society professes to respect. And, does the catholic then revere and practise the *moral precepts* of the law of nature? Yes, and I could appeal for the truth of this even to the attestations of the greatest enemies of our religion—to men who do it justice with regret, and who censure it whenever the slightest circumstance presents to their prejudices the smallest room for disapprobation. The class of writers, to whom fashion—not wisdom—has given the title of philosophers, and who were perfectly acquainted with the maxims of catholicity, unanimously allow, that in regard, at least, to its moral precepts, it is wise, pure, and reasonable;—and wiser, purer, and more reasonable far, than aught which the sages of antiquity, in their portraits of virtue, have described; or in their dreams of piety, imagined. In reality, the thing is so incontestible, that I feel a repugnance to make the useless demonstration. It is almost an insult to virtue, to prove that virtue is not immoral.—Let wisdom then interrogate our code of morals, as it is opposed, in the first place, to the influences of *vice*. It will find that there is no disorder which it does not condemn; no crime which it does not punish; no excess which it does not censure; no



passion which it does not labour to restrain.—Let it consult our maxims in respect to *virtue*. It will discover, equally, that there is no excellence which they do not inculcate; no perfection which they do not encourage. They command love for God; and charity for men:—they command justice, candor, purity and temperance. In affluence they ordain moderation; in poverty, patience: they regulate affection; purify friendship; and inspire benevolence, even to our greatest enemies.—Let it ask, what are the *motives* that our religion dictates, as encouragements to observe the law of nature? As encouragements to its observance, she holds out,—it will discover, every motive that can stimulate ardor; every recompense that can animate piety,—the friendship of the Divinity, and the effusions of his blessings, both in this life, and in the life to come. To encourage virtue, she attaches merit, not merely to great exertions and to important actions,—effects which are not proportioned to the situations of mankind in general, and which seldom happen;—but to the meanest sacrifice and to the most trifling disposition of the will. The widow's mite is in her estimation, valuable as the largest effusions of opulence. To induce us to act with piety, our religion in every transaction places us under the eye of the Divinity; bids us look up to him; and by his will, conduct and regulate, not only the series of our actions, but the very movements of our hearts.—In short, whoever will ascertain the moral principles which the catholic profess-

es, will find, that, whilst he professes every injunction of the law of nature, he superadds to his professions every motive which can bring them into action, or give energy to virtue—every thing that is calculated to form the good man; the good subject; the good citizen; the good friend; the good parent.—Should there be any who call these truths in question, I will only say, that either they are the stupidly ignorant, who know nothing of our religion, or the inveterately prejudiced, who shut their eyes to the light of evidence. In fact, there is not a single moral precept of the law of nature, which the most rigid protestant respects, that the catholic does not respect, equally.

To the precepts of the law of nature, the wisdom of our divine Legislator has appended,—not as obligations, but as improvements on its obligations,—not as circumstances essential to salvation, but as means which facilitate salvation,—he has appended certain acts of piety, which divines, in order to distinguish them from the precepts of the laws of nature and of the gospel, usually denominate *evangelical counsels*.—“*If thou desire, says Christ, to be perfect, go, sell all thou hast, and give it to the poor, (Matt. xix.)—If any man will come after me, let him deny himself. (Matt. xvi.)—It is good for a man, says St. Paul, not to touch a woman. . . He who gives his virgin in marriage, does well; but he who gives her not, does better.*” (1 Cor. vii.)—The import of these passages is extremely plain. They evidently imply,—that the voluntary renuncia-

tion of riches, in order to relieve distress,—the voluntary renunciation of our own wills, in order to imitate the obedience of Christ Jesus to the will of his eternal Father,—the voluntary renunciation of carnal pleasures, in order *the more assiduously to attend to the things which belong to God*—are actions, which, because they are heroic,—because they are sacrifices of the feelings and interests which are the dearest to human self-love,—are, therefore, the principles of virtue; and the expressions of virtue which are pleasing to the God of all perfection. The wonder only is,—so simple is the signification of the above texts,—how any can misconceive them:—\*—and the equally great wonder is, how any who revering the sacred scriptures, revere also the recommendations of their Redeemer, can possibly blame the men who have the fortitude to observe his counsels.—However, be this as it may, the catholic church conceiving, that it is proper and wise to practise what Jesus,

\* It is, a fact, that a multitude of the Scotch reprobate the form and use of the Lord's prayer. *It is common*, "says the author of the extracts of Scotch Eloquence, *to hear the people say, as the best apology for condemning it, that Christ was young when he composed it.*"—(Proof this of the folly of all allowing every one to be the interpreter of the sacred scriptures.)—But, query? Profane as is this apology, is it not full as good as the arguments of the generality of protestants, who affecting to venerate the recommendations of Jesus Christ, condemn the evangelical counsels?—If men will condemn what Christ recommends, why not, as an apology say, that "*he was young when he made such recommendations!*"



or the gospel recommends---conceives therefore, that it is proper also and wise, to superadd to the observance of the gospel-precepts, the observance of the gospel-counsels.---Accordingly, these counsels are revered by the whole body of the catholic church, although, indeed, they are practised only by a certain portion of its members. They constitute the rule, or the basis of the rule, of all its *religious orders*. These, all observe them:---and even the better to ensure their observance, they again superadd to their severity, a great variety of severe provisions and painful regulations;---but provisions and regulations, which are calculated, if virtue consist in the subjugation of passion and self-will, to render the men, who obey them, holy, innocent and sanctified.

It is not here the place---since here I am only pointing out the *principles* of holiness---to shew you how well and how widely the above counsels are observed, throughout nearly the whole extent of the catholic church. Until that great convulsion---the French Revolution---whose chief fury was directed against our divine establishment---they were in every catholic country observed by a countless multitude of its members. Until then, almost every town, in every catholic country, presented one or more of those retreats, where virtue flourished, that would have excited admiration in the fairest ages of the christian institute. *There*, lived the martyrs of charity, whose health, and strength, and time were devoted to the



assistance of the sick, and to the consolation of distress. *There*, subsisted the apostolic missionary, who prodigal of life, was preparing to meet pestilence, or slavery, or death, for the salvation of his fellow-men. *There*, wept the humble penitent, and the pensive solitary, who forgotten by this world, and forgetting it, employed all their industry in fitting themselves for a better. *There*, sighed the spotless vestal and the tender virgin, who with robes pure, as those with which they had been clothed at the baptismal font,—and with hearts pure as their robes, were incessantly engaged in preparing themselves for the banquet of the Lamb.—The number of these establishments, I have insinuated, is now lessened:—indeed it is very greatly lessened. However, although lessened, yet they are not *all*, by any means, abolished. There still exists in various places, a multitude of these schools of severe morality—of severe morality reduced to the severest practice,—schools, in which, amid the general peal of passion that stuns society, little else is taught but penance—and which, amid the general wreck of vice are the standing, striking monuments of heroic virtue.

And might I not, even in the lives of the *secular clergy* of the catholic church, present another proof of its veneration for strict morality, and of its respect for the recommendations of the gospel? The whole body of its secular clergy, in every corner of the universe, although from the nature of their situations and employments, they do not cultivate that poverty, nor

practise that obedience, which Christ Jesus inculcates as the source of great perfection, yet do they everywhere cultivate the divine virtue of chastity, and forego the sensual gratifications of the state of matrimony. The *celibacy* of our clergy is certainly a prominent feature in the holiness of the catholic religion---honourable to the institute, beneficial to the public, respectful to our mysteries, and a principle of sanctification to the individual who professes it. I could easily produce attestations from a multitude of our protestant adversaries, to confirm this,—for multitudes of our adversaries, though they have not had the fortitude to imitate our celibacy, have had the candour to admire its heroism, and to praise its wisdom.\*

\*“The reason of single life for the clergy,” says Mr. Thorn-dyke, “is firmly grounded by the fathers and canons of the church, upon the precepts of St. Paul, forbidding man and wife to part, unless for a time, to attend to prayer. For priests and deacons being continually to attend, upon occasions of celebrating the Eucharist, which ought continually to be frequented, if others be to abstain from the use of marriage for a time, *then they always.*” Letters at the end of Just Weights and Measures.

“Marriage,” he says elsewhere, “stands with christianity, yet single life is a safer way to perfection.” Just Weights and Measures.

It is well known how forcibly the great and good Dr. Butler, Bishop of Durham, used to express his disapprobation of marriage for the clergy. Query? Was not the doctor a catholic?

But, I will proceed to the discussion of the other part of the doctrines of the catholic church—its *mysterious code*. It is the mysterious code of the catholic church, that much more even than its moral tenets, is the object of the incessant censure of the protestant, and the butt of his most pointed ridicule. Against it, fanaticism armed with bigotry, and illiberality fortified by ignorance, have teemed out every species of insult that the ingenuity of hostility could devise. However, it is with the protestant insults of our mysterious creed, and with the protestant representation of its bearings, as it is with nearly the whole series of protestant conduct in treating of our religion,—they are groundless and unjust.—They have ignorance or error for their principle; misrepresentation for their proof; invective for their confirmation. And it is a truth, which in this temple of charity I mention with reluctance,—such is the case with the best defenders of the cause of protestantism when either they combat our doctrines, or pretend to represent them. On these occasions, the man, who perhaps in every other transaction is temperate, becomes violent; and he who in his other writings is candid, becomes insincere. It was thus formerly with the Stillingfleets, the Burnetts, the Tiltotsons—it was thus lately with the Seckers, the Porteouses, the Hurds—and it is thus now with the Barringtons, the Rennels, the Churtens.\* Generous per-

\*Bishop Bedell, speaking of the general manner in which, in his time, the protestants were wont to treat the catholics, says, in



haps by disposition, and liberal by habit, these men,—and the host of our adversaries resembles them—are, when they combat catholicity, ungenerous and illiberal. The circumstance, it is true, may be eventually injurious to us, and useful to the cause of protestantism. I believe that it is so: yet it is true, also, that it is a compliment to us, and an insult to that sect; the proof of the strength of our religion, and the concession of the weakness of that religion, which needs such measures for its defence. For, can aught attest more forcibly the strength of any cause, than to behold moderation and candour themselves reduced to the pitiful obligation of being intemperate and insincere, in order to combat it with success? Or can aught evince, more evidently, the weakness of any cause, than to see its defenders pushed to the dreadful expedient of calling in injustice, in order to defend it with effect? Temperance and truth are the arms which alone re-

one of his Sermons—*“they give loose to their tongues and pens; and what they say, is only a series of calumnies and injurious language.”* Burnett, who wrote the good Bishop’s Life, acknowledges the truth of this assertion.

Speaking of the present mode of treating the catholics, Dr. Parr remarks—*“Sincere, as is my attachment to protestantism, yet I am pained at the outrageous invectives which are thrown out against the Church of Rome.”* Spittal Sermon. How true it is

Vetus atque antiqua simulas;  
Immortale odium, et nunquam sanabile vulnus  
Ardet adhuc.



ligion administers, and which a good cause needs:--- violence and misrepresentation the arms of error, and the auxiliaries of injustice. But having asserted that violence and misrepresentation are the arms with which the protestants combat catholicity,---an assertion, which if false, it is both illiberal and criminal in me to make,---let me only add, that should you, or any individual doubt it, I refer you, and that individual, to their writings. Their writings are the vouchers of whatever I have asserted. Consulting them, you will find all the violence which I have imputed to them; and comparing in them the delineation of our doctrines, with what our doctrines really are, you will discover that I have attributed no disingenuity to them, which they do not, in fact, contain.

To come, then, to our mysterious doctrines:---what are those mysterious doctrines, which I have said are another attestation of the holiness of catholicity? My brethren, I might answer, *all* of them; because all of them are divine. But I answer, why even those very doctrines are attestations of the holiness of catholicity, which its adversaries object to it, as the proofs of its profaneness.

The protestant adduces, as the most striking proofs of the profaneness of the catholic church, its belief and adoration of the eucharist; its veneration and invocation of the saints; its prayers and sacrifices for the dead; its principles respecting the necessity of good works; its system of repentance and confession;

its esteem for indulgences.--These are the chief, and nearly all the doctrines, which, with acrimonious hostility, its adversaries urge against it, as evidences of its departure, in point of doctrine, from the sanctity of the christian institute. Well, my brethren, and I contend, that even these very doctrines are the evidences—striking evidences—of its sanctity:—doctrines too, which in their various bearings, are all of them calculated to promote the sanctity of the faithful. Let us, a moment, consider the nature of each of these for ever-insulted doctrines.

*The belief and adoration of the eucharist, it is said, are the proof of the departure of our church from the holiness of the christian institute!* And what, then do we believe, respecting this important mystery?—We believe that it contains the body and blood of our great Redeemer; that body which was immolated, and that blood which was shed, to expiate our offences;—we believe, that bequeathed to us to be the food and the nourishment of our souls, it is, therefore, a principle of grace, and a source of sanctification:—that to receive it well, is the greatest of earthly blessings; to receive it ill, the greatest of possible calamities;— and that *to receive it well, demands purity from the defilements of sin, united to great purity of disposition.* Such is our belief, and such our ideas respecting the mystery of the eucharist. Can even prejudice say that they are unholy? Or rather, can it refuse to own that they are calculated to exalt the mind to the

highest degree of holiness? Certainly, they are calculated to make it holy;—to inspire the most ardent devotion; to awaken the most lively gratitude;—to excite the most vigilant attention to the preservation of the chastest innocence. Hence, you may all of you remark, that in society, or in the circles of your acquaintance, if there be any that you know, who are virtuous and holy, they are those who entertain a great veneration for this mystery, and who receive it often. Let me repeat to you, what the most celebrated writer, in what is termed the school of philosophy, says of the holy eucharist, and of the effects which it is formed to produce. “Behold the man, he says, who, amid an awful ceremony, receives the holy communion. His whole soul is seized, and strongly affected. Hardly does he breathe. He is detached from every thing that is earthly:—he is united to his God. God is incorporated with his flesh and blood. Who will dare—who possibly can, after such an action, commit a fault? It is impossible to imagine a mystery, that could bind men more forcibly to virtue.”\*

*The veneration and invocation of the saints!* Induced by the most weighty motives, and the clearest evidences, we do indeed revere the memories of the saints, and invoke their intercession. But in our veneration and invocation, there is nothing repugnant to holiness; nothing derogatory to the divine honour;†

\*Voltaire. Questions Sur L'Encyclopedie.

†“Upon a full inquiry,” says the learned and candid protestant



nothing injurious to the merits of our eternal Mediator. We respect the saints, and petition the assistance of their intercession, as the servants merely of the Almighty, and as our fellow creatures,—deserving, it is true, peculiar respect, because they are honoured with peculiar graces, and entitled to be invoked, because they possess peculiar interest at the throne of heaven. But, this allowance being made for their superior excellence over the saints on earth, and for the greater measure of their influence over the virtuous in this life,—this allowance made—the nature, in reality, of the veneration which we pay to both, is precisely similar. We honour both,—from both we beg the assistance of their prayers;—saying to both of them merely, *Brethren pray for us*. Where is the unholiness of this kind of veneration? The veneration thus paid, and the invocation thus addressed, are, manifestly, tributes presented to the Almighty—the veneration being referred entirely to His gifts,—the invocation implying plainly the expectation that all must come to us from the great streams of His beneficence. And then, too, in the veneration which we pay to the saints, our religion incessantly bids us look up to their *example*, in order to copy it into the con-

author of the *Essay for Catholic communion*—“upon a full inquiry into this matter, I find those of the church of Rome place their trust and confidence in God, and in the mediatorship of Christ; hoping for no salvation, but through the merits of his sacred passion, in the same manner as we do in our church. This may be seen in their ordinary books of devotion and instruction.”



duct of our lives---to their *rewards*, in order to animate our piety by exertion to earn the like. The contemplation of their virtues, and the sight of the glorious reversion which has awaited them, are objects that insinuate and encourage sanctity. And again, lest ignorance or indolence might imagine that the veneration of the saints, and the invocation of their prayers, are beneficial, without the imitation of their example, the church tells us often, (and we all believe it,) that all respect for the memory of the saints, and all confidence in their protection, *without the imitation of their virtues*, are not only unavailing, but even a mockery of the saints, and an insult to the God of the saints.— Surely these principles—not hostility can contest it,—are friendly to the interests of holiness.

*Our prayers and sacrifices for the dead!* It is not now the time to establish the evidences on which reposes our charity for the dead. If there be one mystery in religion, which reason alone is competent to establish, it is the existence of that place of punishment which we call purgatory. Indeed, by a singular revolution in the public mind, a great—perhaps even the greater part of the enlightened members of the reformed establishments, acknowledge now, its wisdom and its necessity.\* But how—for this is the

\*The Socinian portion of the protestant church admits the existence of a purgatory, because it rejects the existence of eternal punishments; while another portion of protestantism admits it on the evidence of its reasonableness. “*The generality of mankind,*”

sole subject of our discussion on this occasion—how are our tenets respecting purgatory, and the prayers and sacrifices which are the appendages of our tenets, the attestation of the holiness of the catholic church, or the principles of holiness in the faithful? My brethren, because they enlarge the sphere of charity,—we believe that our piety is beneficial to the unhappy beings who are confined in that place of woe:—because they encourage the cultivation of penance,—we believe that our acts of mortification are accepted by the mercy of God, as tributes to his justice in favour of the departed:—because they are incitements to innocence and purity of conduct,—we believe that the smallest offence, if not expiated in this life, will be severely punished until it is expiated in the life to come:—because they impress the most awful ideas of the strictness of the eternal justice,—we believe, that for mere human frailties and venial imper-

a multitude of protestants say, reasoning like Dr. Johnson, (whose words I employ) *“the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted in the society of the blessed spirits; and therefore God is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of sufferings. You see,”* adds here the doctor, *“there is nothing unreasonable in this.”*

We even find that many of the first reformers allowed the existence of purgatory. Luther owns it to Eckius; and in several parts of his various works. Melancthon, in the Apology for the Augsburg Confession, says, *“The ancient fathers speak often of prayers for the dead; and we do not forbid them.”*

fections, God rigourously afflicts even his favourites and his friends:— because they teach us to bear the sufferings of our present state with fortitude and resignation,---we believe that patience under affliction is one of the best substitutions in the room of future torments. Such and similar to these are our principles, and such the effects resulting from our principles, respecting purgatory. Who will say, that either they are not holy, or that they are not calculated to promote the reign of holiness?

*Our maxims respecting good works, and our systems of repentance, confession and indulgences!* I will class all these doctrines in this place together; not only because their separate consideration would exceed the limits of a discourse, but because their respective operations and effects are often similar,—sometimes alike. They are all of them powerful inducements to the cultivation of virtue; to the practice of piety; and to the frequentation of the holy sacraments. Our maxims respecting good works, are a constant exhortation, not only to observe all the commandments of God, and the precepts of the church, but to unite with their observance, the spirit of penance and the use of mortification. Our principles of repentance are, like the above, a perpetual invitation to compunction of heart; to works of self-denial; to the flight from



sin, and to the love of God.\* Our practice of confession is one of the strongest barriers that wisdom could possibly oppose to the violence of passion, and to the inroads of vice. It is the nurse of innocence; the soother of affliction; the friend of misfortune; and the source of the purest satisfactions which a heart can experience, that is solicitous for salvation.† Our system of indulgences is a continual call to penance, to prayer, to acts of charity and devotion. So that

\* Speaking of our doctrines respecting repentance, the writer of the *Essay for Catholic Communion* says, "I have examined their councils, their catechisms, their prayer books, and practical treatises, and I find the point of repentance is as strictly pressed, and a true conversion, with amendment of life, declared as necessary for the pardon of sin, by them, as it is, or can be, by us." He says the same, in nearly the same words, respecting our tenets of *good works*.

† "Confession, says Voltaire, is an excellent institution, a curb to crime, and formed to induce hearts, which are ulcerated by hatred, to forgive." *Quest. Encycl.*

What reparations and restitutions, says Rousseau, does not confession produce among catholics." *Emil.*

Dr. Beattie used often to remark, that suicide was unknown in England, while the practice of confession subsisted.

"Private confession, says Bishop Montague, is of very ancient practice in the church; and of excellent use and benefit." *Appeal.*

Hence, the Lutherans, in general, retain the use of confession:--and so sensible were some of the reformed cities in which it was suppressed, of the evils which resulted from its suppression, that they anxiously solicited its re-establishment.

were it even true, that the doctrines of the catholic church were not divine, yet would it still be true, that they are holy;—of a nature to promote the dominion of virtue; to extend the influences of piety; and to render mankind, wise, temperate, and happy.

Or, should there be any one who calls in question the accuracy of these assertions, who yet is unwilling to give himself the trouble to discuss them by the process of study and investigation, let me refer such individual to a very simple method of ascertaining them. Let the man, who doubts the holiness of our doctrines, consult,—the thing is easy,—the lives of those catholics who know them most correctly; who believe them with the greatest reverence; and who knowing and believing them, make them also the rule and the basis of their conduct. The best test of the properties of our doctrines is their fruits. Well, my brethren,—I have here no apprehension of being contradicted,—wherever you, or any enemy of catholicity, are acquainted with the catholic who reduces to practice the principles of the catholic religion, that man, I boldly assert it, is holy. He is virtuous by following them, as by a strange inversion, or rather contradiction of practice to principle, (I shall shew this hereafter)—the protestant who is virtuous, is virtuous by not following the principles of protestantism. In reality, our doctrines are those, whose cultivation has, in every age, exalted the saints to perfection. They are the doctrines which the Chrysos-

toms, the Basils, the Cyrils and the Gregories, preached; those for which the martyrs bled; and those, which, in every nation, formed to piety the wise, the distinguished, and the good. So evident is the identity of our doctrines with those of the saints and the early fathers, that the generality of the first reformers have ridiculed the writings of the latter, and treated their persons with contempt;—vilifying both, as they conceived, by the intentionally insulting, but in fact, the honourable epithet of *papist*. Thus, Luther, Calvin, the Centuriators, and many of our English reformed divines, treat these illustrious personages and their immortal works. What a compliment to our doctrines, and what a forcible attestation of their holiness!

IV. The next circumstance which I have noticed, as forming another characteristic of the holiness of the true church, is the nature of the *practices* which it prescribes, and which its members follow. It is indeed, evident, that as all means should correspond to their end,—and as the practices of piety are the means of attaining piety,—so they should be essentially holy and conducive to the sanctification of the faithful. They should be those, or such as those, which Christ Jesus taught, and his apostles inculcated. Hence it is easy to imagine what should be their properties. They should be rigid and austere; animating and pious:—rigid and austere, in order to subdue passion and to expiate sin;—animating and pious, in order to in-



spire ardour and to nourish innocence. "*Whoever,*" says the great finisher of our faith, "*will come after me, let him deny himself.*" (Matt. xvi.) "*When the bridegroom,*" he adds "*shall be taken away, then they, (my disciples,) shall fast.*" (Matt. ix.) Similar to these, are the ideas which St. Paul suggests, of the nature of the discipline of religion. "*I chastise my body,*" he says, "*and bring it into subjection.*" (1 Cor. ix.) In his second epistle to the same people, he tells them, "*We carry about with us in our bodies, the mortification of Jesus Christ. Let us shew ourselves,*" he exhorts them, "*worthy servants of God, by patience, and sufferings, and labour; by watchings, and fasts, and chastity.*" (2 Cor. vi.) The practices, which in the purest ages of the christian institute, the saints and the virtuous revered, were planned upon these recommendations, and were conformable to them,—"*We extenuate ourselves,*" says Tertullian, "*by fasting, and by every kind of continency. We shrink from all the sensualities of life. We cover ourselves with sackcloth, and sleep on ashes. We do violence to heaven by our desires, and bend it to mercy by our prayers.*" Doubtlessly, nothing is more incontestible, than that the practices of the true church are holy.

And, are the practices of the catholic church of this description?—As here, there is question of facts and external regulations, the evidence of whose existence must, if they exist, be palpable;—and the evidence of whose holiness must, if they be founded up-

on the models which I have cited---be equally palpable,---I answer without any hesitation---yes. Yes, the practices of the catholic church are of this description. Our Redeemer, I have said, had ordained, that "*those who follow him, should deny themselves:*"---and the catholic church incessantly inculcates, and multitudes of her members practise what she inculcates,---the most rigid self-denials and the most painful mortifications. He had said, that "*when the bridegroom should be taken away, his disciples should fast:*"---and the catholic church compels her children to the frequent observance of this penitential exercise;---not, like the establishment of this country, consigning the injunction of our Redeemer, to the tables of her calendar,---to be known to all, yet observed by none,---but enforcing it strongly, and watching attentively over its fulfilment. Our fasts and abstinences are still frequent; and still, notwithstanding the relaxations of the age, very generally respected. St. Paul had said, that the servants of God should shew themselves such "*by watchings, and fastings, and chastity.*" and these are virtues,---I have already shewn it,---which the catholic church reveres and practises. Thy are the constant practice of the hosts of her cloistered subjects, of the body of her clergy, and of many even who are engaged in the active scenes of life. It is our *watchings* only that may not perhaps be rightly understood. But, these we cultivate by the frequency of our festivals, by the frequency

of our devotions, and by the not unfrequent use which we make of spiritual retreats. There are few catholics, except the most illiterate and the indolent, who have not occasionally recourse to this salutary source of virtue. To the above practices of piety, recommended by Christ Jesus and his apostles, I might add several others which we respect, that are both the principles, and the proofs of holiness. The daily celebration of our sacred mysteries, is an incessant call to our tremendous sanctuaries, where the mere nature of our belief is sufficient to inflame devotion. By the frequent return of our indulgences, and the benefits which they present,—by the assiduous frequentation of the sacraments, and the graces which they offer to the penitent receiver,—by these piety is encouraged, virtue is made more easy, and the mind exalted to the love and veneration of the Divinity. Even in the less important practices, that are the appendages, rather than the parts of our religion, there is much to instruct reason, and to warm devotion. The solemnity of our worship, the order of our rites and ceremonies, our canonical hours, &c. are instructions that teach, and exhortations that excite the mind to piety.\*

\*“The absurd rigourists in religion,” says Diderot, “know nothing of the effect of external ceremonies on the mind of the people. They create an enthusiasm, which I sometimes feel myself. I never witness the solemnity of a procession—the long line of priests in sacerdotal habits; the crowds which precede and follow them, in religious silence; the multitude prostrate on the ground;



In the portrait which I have presented of the catholic religion, I am aware that I have exhibited its beauties without any mixture of deformity; its brighter parts without any union of shade. And are there, then, no deformities that lessen the gracefulness of its beauties; no shades that diminish the effulgence of its brightness?—in other words, are there no abuses, no corruptions, no disorders and superstitions, which blended with its maxims, and united with its practices, disfigure and disgrace its sanctity? My brethren, if upon this part of my subject, the accounts were true, which our adversaries give of our religion, there is nothing in the annals of vice more horrible; nothing in the history of superstition more preposterous. We profess doctrines, according to these accounts, which even sanctify guilt; and we observe practices that mock at reason. It is indeed by misrepresentation, I have often observed already—that error supports the cause of error; and by the violence of declamation, that hostility misleads the vulgar. That in the catholic church, then, there do exist abuses, corruptions, and superstitions, is a truth which I acknowledge with

—I never hear their grave and pathetic music, without the strongest sensations of devotion, and without the tribute of a tear. I knew a protestant painter in Rome, who used to allow, that he never saw the sovereign pontiff officiate in St. Peter's, but he became a catholic. (*Sans devenir catholique.*)” And adds the philosopher, “if you suppress the sensible symbols, the rest becomes a metaphysical gallimatia, as varied as the variety of men's imaginations.” *Essais sur la Peinture.*

regret;—a truth, over which I drop the tear of sorrow. Certainly there are abuses in the catholic church.—But having said this, let me also say,—that they are abuses which do not destroy her claims to holiness;—abuses, which not herself, but the passions and ignorance of individuals have introduced;—abuses which do not form any part of her tenets, of her spirit, or of her constitution;—parasitical plants, growing if you will, under the broad shade of the tree of the church, but making no portion of its trunk, its branches, its foliage, or its fruits. There are abuses in the catholic church, and its divine author had foretold, that there would be abuses in it. He had foretold, that the tares should grow along with the good grain; and, *“upon the same foundation,”* says St. Paul, *“upon which some build gold, silver, and precious stones, others shall build wood, hay, and stubble.”*—(1 Cor. iii.) The case is, Christ Jesus has fenced his church, but not each individual among its members, against corruption. Therefore, since ignorance, and passion, and prejudice, subsist every where, they subsist also, and they bring forth their fruits, within the sacred precincts of the church. But thus, they no more prove its want of holiness, than the abuses which exist in governments, in the sciences, in philosophy, prove that these objects are devoid of wisdom. It is therefore wrong to judge of the excellence of an institution from the existence of a few abuses; and particularly wrong to judge of its excellence from the existence of a few abuses which

it condemns. Where man is the agent, there will be abuses. They exist every where;—in the best and the wisest institutions; and I am sure they exist,—not the partiality of our adversaries will deny it,—with luxuriant secundity in the reformed establishments. However, if notwithstanding the evidence of these reflections,—if the protestant still persist in reproaching the catholic church with its abuses, let me remind him not to forget its perfections. Comparing its abuses and its perfections together, he will find that the former are less numerous than the latter;—or, that if its corruptions be great and various, its benefits and excellencies are still greater and more various, than its corruptions. And then between its abuses and perfections, between its corruptions and its excellencies, he will find this important difference and distinction, that the abuses and corruptions are the effects—not of the doctrines and constitution of the catholic church,—but of the passions and ignorance of its members;—whilst its perfections and its excellencies are the genuine fruits of its principles. The abuses are the faults of individuals; the perfections are its own.

V. The last feature, which at the beginning of my discourse, I have said, is another mark of the holiness of the true church, is *the holiness of its members*. That this feature, too, is requisite to attest the divinity of the church, is a truth, which is at least equally incontestible as any which I have yet adduced. It was principally to confer holiness on the members of the



church—"to cleanse to himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works, that Christ Jesus came." (Tit. ii.) The sanctification of his followers was the great end of all that he taught, did, and suffered, during his painful career on earth; the motive of all his institutions, and indeed the end, the motive, and the aim of all religion. Of course, holiness should be eminently conspicuous in the lives of the members of the true church.

And, is this holiness,—for this is the important question,—is this holiness conspicuous in the lives of the members of the catholic church? From the trifling sketch, which I have already made, of the conduct and practices of a considerable portion of the catholic world, I might, perhaps, without much boldness, answer the question in the affirmative. That sketch presented a scene of piety, that was edifying to our reason. However, since this part of my subject is peculiarly interesting and consoling, let me again recal your attention to it.

|| Casting then a look through the vista of time, and following the lapse of ages, I interrogate—beginning with the brightest centuries of the christian institute, and tracing them down to the epoch of the reformation,—I interrogate each century, as it passes in review before me; and I ask it, what was the religion of the saints; of the great, the good and the pious, who flourished during the period of its transit? In order to assist my reason in the pleasing interrogatory I

consult the annals of virtue;—I consult even the protestant writers and historians, who have described the lives of the illustrious personages, that, in each revolving age, during this length of interval, have successively adorned the theatre of life? I ask even them, to what church these distinguished characters belonged? My brethren, the question admits no hesitation of reply. Even these enemies to our religion, with all their prejudices about them, allow that they belonged to that church, to which it is your happiness and mine to be associated. Indeed, the thing is too evident to be contested. Yes, it was to the catholic church, that, during the whole lengthened interval, from the age of the apostles, till the pretended reformation, belonged those legions of heroes, who prodigal of their blood, died the martyrs of Jesus Christ: those hosts of confessors, who fired with the love of God, devoted all their labours to communicate the flames of love to their fellow-creatures:—those illustrious pontiffs, who were the honour and the ornament of their respective ages:—those distinguished doctors, whose learning still beams wisdom upon the world. *Her's*, were those holy penitents, who, indignant at the ingratitude of their former sins, with pious cruelty, inflicted upon their bodies the pains of a lengthened martyrdom:—*her's*, those pious recluses, who flying the contagion of the world, by contemplation and purity, imitated the lives of angels:—*her's*, those spotless virgins, who, superior to their sex, in the most tender bodies possess-

ed the most heroic souls:—*her's*, in short,— for I will not prolong the enumeration,—*her's*, all that immense assemblage of holy characters—prelates, princes, warriors, saints and sages, who, till the æra of protestantism, either edified or adorned the world;—either sanctified themselves, or imparted sanctification to their neighbours. They were all children of the catholic church; born in her bosom; trained to her maxims; enlightened by her doctrines, and purified by her practices.

Passing on from these periods, I consider, in the next place, the age that beheld the reformation rise;—that age, whose corruptions are alledged as the motives of that great revolution,—and whose corruptions, it is too true, were certainly very great, so great, that the church wept over them, and its pastors, very generally, urged the necessity of their correction.—However, notwithstanding the greatness of these evils, I can trace,—(and so might prejudice too, if like certain insects, which attach themselves to ulcers in preference to the sounder parts of a body, it did not contemplate abuses only, and turn away the eye from perfections)—I can trace, distinctly, even during this period, those features of holiness, which mark out the true religion. The sixteenth century was not unfruitful in saints; not barren in virtue; not unprolific in generating children to Jesus Christ. It exhibited a multitude of examples of sanctity, which heresy itself reveres. It saw the Boromæoes, the Francis de



Sales, &c. display in their conduct, the piety and virtues of the apostles:—the Cajetans, the Francis Borgia, &c. present in their lives, the mortification and humility of the early penitents:—the Vincent of Paul, the John of the Cross, &c. shew forth the ardour of the first confessors:—the Teresas, the Rose de Lima, &c. diffuse around them the odours of the purest chastity. It saw Xavier plant the cross on the burning sands of India; and Bertrand transport it to the snows and mountains of America. It saw verified that saying of the apostle---“*their sound went forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*”---The fruits, too, which the zeal and piety of these men produced, were striking, still more than the zeal itself which gave them birth. They brought nations into the fold of Christ,---nations emulating by their fervour, the first converts to the christian cause; and by their numbers, compensating amply for the losses, which, in Europe, the church sustained by the deserts of the reformation.

I could produce attestations of the holiness of the sixteenth century, without referring to the calendar of its saints, or to the annals of piety. The general history of the sixteenth century presents a long list of holy characters, and pious personages, not only within the recesses of the cloister, but on the open theatre of public life. The annals of our own country exhibit to us, in the persons of our Mores, Poles, and Fishers, examples of greatness united to goodness,---I do not

say unequalled,—but certainly not exceeded by the examples of any other nations display similar—or nearly similar instances. Even the reformers themselves, in their various writings, not unfrequently allow, that the paths of domestic life, at this epoch, were crowded with men of virtuous habits,—lamenting honestly at the same time, that since the introduction of their own innovations, these men, before so virtuous, had become profligate and immoral.\* We have the testimonies of these same reformers, that the sanctuary; although disgraced indeed by the vices of some of its members, was yet adorned by the virtues of a multitude of others. We have their acknowledgment, humiliating as it must appear to the protestant, that even themselves, while still they were catholics, and immured in the solitude of the cloister, were chaste, fervent, humble, obedient, and meek. “*Whilst I was a monk,*” says Luther, “*I practised all the virtues of the religious state.*” But let the testimony of Erasmus suf-

\* “God has shewn us,” says Melancthon, “how great an injury we have done to the souls of men, by the precipitation with which we have compelled them to detach themselves from the Pope. Men have now thrown off the yoke of piety, and wanton in licentiousness: as if, by ruining the papal power, they had destroyed the power of the scriptures, of the sacraments, and of the sacred ministry.”—(Ep.)

“And we see,” adds Luther, “that by the malice of the devil, men are now become more avaricious, more cruel, more profligate and insolent, and much worse than they were under the papacy.”—In Postil. Dom.

fice to give us a general idea of the state of the catholic church, at the era to which I am alluding. Erasmus was perfectly acquainted with the temper and character of the times, being a witness and a conspicuous actor in them,—and his testimony too, is considered as impartial by the protestants themselves. Hear what he says. “*Such,*” these are his words, “*Such is the state of the catholic church at present, that were Paul himself to descend from heaven to witness it, it would not, I think, displease him.*”

But, did there not, then, in the age of the reformation, and for many ages previous to it—did there not exist great corruption? Did there not live a multitude of men, who by the profligacy of their morals, disgraced their own character, and cast a shade over the sanctity of the church? Yes, my brethren, and, this multitude was extremely great. There lived in the age of the reformation, and there had lived long before, bad prelates, bad popes, bad priests, bad princes; ---bad men in every capacity, and in every department of society: We own all this, and lament it. But, here, let me again recal to your recollection those principles by which, when acknowledging the abuses which disfigure the beauty of the church, I proved to you, that abuses, although they disfigure, by no means, destroy its beauty. The same principles applied here, in a similar manner, will explain how corruption may reign among its members, without destroying its holi-



ness. The fact is, that the church, though holy in all its features, and holy, eminently, in the piety of its members,—does not consist,—was not designed to consist—only of the virtuous, or of the elect. In the descriptions which its divine author has furnished of it, he delineates it, as comprising both the virtuous and the wicked; both the saint and the sinner. He calls it sometimes, “*a barn-floor overspread with the wheat and the chaff:*”---sometimes, “*a net holding every kind of fishes:*”---sometimes, even he inculcates, that the number of the wicked, whom it contains, should exceed the number of the virtuous;---*many*, he says, *are called*—and these *called* are the members of the church;---*but, few are chosen*. (Matt. xx.) Holiness, therefore, though a prominent feature in the divinity of the church, is, by no means, necessarily conspicuous in *all* its members. In respect to the holiness of the members of the church, perhaps, I might say of it, what is said of its infallibility. Holiness, like infallibility, belongs to the church, but is not essential to any individual member. They are both of them promised and secured to the sanctuary of religion, but not to the palace or the mansion of the prelate. In reality, be the above comparison correct or not,—these are the maxims, which men, nearly all, admit as we do:---it is not in the nature of religion; not in the properties of grace, to render men impeccable; to necessitate them to holiness; or by any compulsive, mechanic influences, ---by springs and levers---to force them into piety.

Religion and grace leave us free. They leave us our passions, and the dangerous propensities of our concupiscence. Of course, where is the cause for wonder, that formed and situated, as men are, in this life, many should be corrupted? Formed and situated, as men are, the wonder is—and this, precisely, forms the subject of the triumph of the catholic church,—the wonder is, that so many of its children should be holy. Their holiness is a strong attestation of its divinity; whilst the want of holiness in the rest, proves only the weakness of human nature.

But let me, too, again remark, as I did in regard of abuses—that whatever corruptions grow in the paths of the church, and disgrace its members, they are not the effects of its doctrines, nor the fruits of its institutions. They are, on the contrary, the effects of the neglect of its doctrines, and the fruits of the contempt of its institutions. The church, I have shewn you, condemns every species of vice, and abhors every form of corruption. Or, if the existence of vice among the members of the church, be an argument against its divinity, then would it be impossible, at any period since its establishment, to evince its divinity by the circumstance of its sanctity. For even at the purest periods,—at the periods when the streams of grace were the most abundant, and when the walks of life were purpled with the blood of its martyrs,—even then, there existed a multitude of its members, who by their disorders, disgraced their characters, and despised the laws of virtue. Every age has witnessed

vice, and every age will continue to witness it, till time shall cease to run. It is the evil of our nature, not of religion. It is only in heaven that virtue reigns unmixed with the alloy of passion.\*

But, my brethren, I have said that the feature of the holiness of the members of the true church is like the church itself, immortal;—a feature which it retains for ever, as the appendage and characteristic of its divinity. Of course, it remains for me yet to prove, that if indeed the catholic church be the true church, it retains that feature still, and that its members are still distinguished by the purity and the piety of their conduct. Here no doubt you will expect, that I shall speak with modesty, if not with diffidence. Seeing that the tide of vice has broken down so many of the mounds of piety,—so many of those sacred fences which once sheltered innocence and protected virtue, ---and that it has inundated the paths and avenues of

\* Even from the circumstance of the prevalence of vice, which we own has reigned among the pastors and members of the catholic church, a very forcible argument might be deduced in favour of its divinity. For while in other establishments, men,—reformers,—have bent the laws of religion to their inclinations, or accommodated them to the passions of their deluded followers,—in the catholic church, even at the most corrupted periods, and under the most corrupted pastors, its doctrines always preserved their purity; its maxims always retained their rigour:—no principles of vice were ever engrafted on its tenets. Had the catholic church been a human and political institution, surely, within the long space of eighteen hundred years, the vices of its members would have vitiated its doctrines.



society---perhaps you may deem it even imprudent, that under such circumstances, I should attempt to prove, that holiness of conduct is still a standing monument of the divinity of our establishment. Certainly, my brethren, it does here become me to speak with modesty. I acknowledge the spread of vice, and the frightful mischiefs which it has caused in its diffusion; ---I acknowledge that in the catholic church, both among its pastors and its people, there prevails corruption---very great corruption,---and that we have departed,---multitudes of us,---from the sanctity of our good forefathers. I acknowledge this, and I weep at the misfortune; but, still I contend that great and prevalent as these evils are,---yet is the holiness of the catholic church, *even now*, conspicuous, in the holiness of its professors;---and that within its pale it possesses an immense host of members, in every state and condition, from the altar to the throne, and from the throne to the cottage, who are eminent for their virtues and their piety,---and whose virtues and piety would have done credit to the church in a more sanctified age than this.---Would to God, my beloved friends, that I could, without the apprehension of flattery, apply this compliment to you! May the holy influences of Grace descend upon you, and fit you to deserve it!

The torrent of irreligion has not swept away, I have observed, all those asylums of catholic virtue, where the penitent weeps; the solitary prays; and the virgin wafts her sighs of love to heaven. Some of these the

mercy of God still suffers to subsist, amid the general wrecks of piety.—Well, my brethren, let the fiercest enemy of our religion—provided only, that he will open his mind to the irradiations of wisdom, and his heart to the feelings of sensibility,—let him enter into one of these retreats. I should wish it to be one, where the discipline is most austere. Let him interrogate the rule of its inhabitants; and trace the whole tenor of their conduct.—Of the rules of our religious institutions, I have already given you a general notion. They consist, all of them, of little else than the heroic counsels recommended by our divine Redeemer, to such of his followers as aspired at great perfection: only, to these are appended a variety of strict provisions, to secure and facilitate their observance. Consequently, if the counsels of Christ Jesus are wise and holy,—wise also, and holy, are the rules of religious orders. Wherefore, interrogating the rule of one of our retreats of piety, the protestant will find it,—not, as probably his ignorance has hitherto believed,—the dictate of indolence, and the suggestion of sensuality and superstition;—he will find it the dictate and suggestion of precisely the contrary virtues,—of painful industry, of rigid mortification, and of enlightened sanctity,—the invention of wisdom to coerce passion, and of piety to enliven virtue: its discipline, frequent fasts, prayers, watching, silence, meditation—and in some institutions, much manual labour. And, let him investigate, in what manner this rule is followed.—

Exceptions, perhaps, (the thing is but too natural)—a few exceptions he may find, from the nice punctuality of its observance. Spite of every precaution that vigilance can employ, dissipation or neglect will sometimes steal into the sanctuaries of virtue, because passion is no where extinguished totally, on this side the grave. But, making this allowance for the accidents of human weakness, our enquirer will find, that the professors of the rule do, in general, with edifying exactitude, comply with its painful and various obligations. Assisting at their exercises of devotion, he will witness a scene that hypocrisy could not imitate;—he will trace, in their fervor and recollection, the expression of something almost angelic; and in the joy which beams on their countenances, he will read the attestation of hearts that are innocent,—of minds that are at rest. Viewing them at their humble meal, he will behold a striking contrast with the luxury of worldly sensuality;—their food, often little else than bread, and a few cold vegetables—their beverage, colder frequently than their vegetables,—the water from the stream that murmurs round their cells. Observing them in their practices of penance, he will see them endure, in some instances, what it would almost seem, the weakness of the human constitution could not bear. Stealing a look at them in the hours of solitude, in the retirement of their cells, he will contemplate creatures absorpt entirely in the prospects of future things. In short, consulting the whole tenor of



their lives, he will find them, at least many of them—I do not say saints, but saintly individuals;—individuals fervent, humble, patient, meek, chaste; and like St. Paul, “*always carrying about in their bodies, the mortification of Jesus Christ.*” (2 Cor. iv.) I have alluded, it is true, only to the most rigid of our conventual institutions; and what I have said respecting them is very strictly correct. But, if even a similar enquiry were made into the conduct of our other less austere establishments, it would, in like manner, be discovered, that they too, in general, comply very edifyingly with the duties of their respective rules; and that, with few exceptions,—for it is morally impossible that there should not be exceptions,—their members are pious, regular and holy.

I have not told our inquirer into the conduct of the religious orders, to ask, who, often, the individuals are that form their members? Asking that question, he would frequently discover that they are—many of them,—the children of fortune, nursed in their early years, in the lap of luxury; and perhaps, till the age of maturity, trained to all the charms of worldly gratification. I did not bid him consult the character of their understandings. Consulting that, he would find out also, that the creatures whom hitherto he has supposed to be the dupes of ignorance, or the victims of their parents’ cruelty, are in reality, individuals possessed of minds the most cultivated and enlightened—and, if indeed, they be the victims of any thing,—

the victims only of divine love. But in short, my brethren, let me conclude my observations on our religious orders, by saying, that whoever derides their institution, or whoever thinks meanly of their members, is in the first instance, unacquainted with the spirit of the christian dispensation, and in the second, he is ignorant of the state of our convents. The virtue and piety which still reign there,—or in the generality of them,—are beautiful features in the portrait of catholic holiness.

And why, also, may I not adduce the lives and conduct of a great multitude of the catholic *clergy*, as another feature in the holiness of the catholic church? Among our clergy—although indeed there be many who are neither saints nor sages,—there are many, who contemning the satisfactions and conveniences of this life, the sensualities of passion, and the pride of wealth, devote all their time, their talents, and their industry, to the painful and humble functions of their sacred ministry; to the instruction of ignorance; to the reformation of vice; to the consolation of distress; to the assistance of the sick;—whilst at the same time, they are models of the virtues which they inculcate to others. These are an attestation of the holiness of the catholic church. I could make this attestation more forcible, did time permit me to conduct you through the whole series of their various duties. Let me only refer you to one of their duties,—the last which I just alluded to, as a circumstance honourable to their piety, and creditable to their religion.

Owing not only to the state of sickness, which particularly at the approaches of death, demands all the aid and consolations of religion,---but owing likewise to the nature of our sacraments, which demand a considerable preparation to fit the receiver for them, ---owing to these circumstances, the attendance of the catholic clergy by the bed of sickness, becomes a serious, a long, and a very painful obligation. Be the nature of the malady what it may, under which the sick man labours, it is their duty, in the face of danger, and with a holy contempt of life, to prepare him for his passage to eternity. For this purpose, not only do they speak to him the soothing words of confidence; animate him to love, or bid him weep at the sight of his past ingratitude:---(all this is easy, and requires neither much fortitude nor much charity to do it,)---they do this---but, too, they do much more than this. In order to fit him for the sacraments which are established to purify him from the stains of sin,---and which perhaps, he has for many years neglected,---they place themselves by the couch where he lies expiring. There---it is a thing that is daily happening, ---they remain for hours, exhorting him, instructing him, and hearing the distressing history of his life;---their heads all this while reclining on the same pillow ---mouth almost touching mouth---and inhaling fever and infection. I do not say that no malady alarms them,---I believe that it sometimes alarms them greatly;---but, neither any malady, nor any alarm,



withholds them from the performance of this awful function. It is what multitudes perform hourly, in prisons, in hospitals, in the hovels of distress, and in every situation where sickness requires their aid.—Irreligion would call such self-devotion rashness;—but in the eyes of piety, it is an act of heroism which virtue only could inspire. It is certainly an act of charity that is creditable to catholicity.

I have said also, that holiness is conspicuous in the catholic church, not only among the ministers of its sanctuary, but among its members in every department of society, from the altar to the throne, and from the throne to the cottage. Perhaps you may have deemed it wrong that I should seem to appeal to *thrones*, as to material tests of the divinity of religion; as if, in a system which is founded on humility, the piety of the peasant were not important as that of the prince. But at least, you have been surprised, that I should seem to appeal to thrones for a testimonial of the holiness of the catholic religion, at a time when the chief part of the catholic thrones,—the firmest and the fairest of them,—have been swept away, or are filled by men who ill replace the princes that were seated on them, lately. As for the circumstance, my brethren, of appealing to thrones for a testimonial of the divinity of religion, I will not discuss the question, whether it be the dictate of wisdom or of prejudice. It may be the dictate of prejudice. However, since piety is peculiarly conspicuous in the prince,—since,

from the influences of his situation, it is peculiarly beneficial to society, and from the dangers of his elevation, peculiarly difficult,---hence do the public attach a measure of importance to the virtue of a throne, which they do not attach to the sanctity of a cottage. And which, then, you will ask me, are the thrones that do credit to our religion? Why, of course, few of them, since, as I have just remarked, the chief part of them have been swept away. But may I not name, without the apprehension of being contradicted,---the thrones of Austria, of Saxony, of Sardinia,---as honourable monuments of the holiness of catholicity?---The princes who are seated on them, are edifyingly devout,---a lesson of virtue to their subjects, and of moderation to the universe. They do not, it is true, possess the spirit of enterprize of our Alfreds, but in their spirit of piety, and in their love of religion, they strikingly resemble that model of christian princes.---And, my brethren, when I mention the name of princes, the recollection no doubt, of our supreme and venerable pontiff, Pius the Seventh, presents itself to your imaginations. He too,---not the ill-will of heresy, or the irreligion of impiety will deny it,---(indeed he has forced both heresy and impiety to revere him,)---he too, is an honour to our holy institute. Like his great predecessor, St. Peter, he is the victim and the sacrifice of tyranny; and like Peter, he is patiently resigned and heroically magnanimous:---greater under the pressure of adversity, than he was amid the splendours of a throne.

But, cast now, my brethren, a look over the great theatre of life, and take a general view of the catholic world, in its various scenes of ease and business; of opulence and poverty. Degenerate as are the times, still you will trace a spectacle that is reputable to the catholic cause. It is the great disadvantage of our institute, that its abuses are known by its adversaries;—its perfections unknown; the vices of its corrupted members, public;—the virtues of its holy members, often private and unseen. However, be this as it may, there are in the circles of life, and in every department of life, a considerable portion of the catholic world, whose lives are innocent and holy;—who possess, not only those shadowy virtues, which custom hangs round with eulogies,—not only the generosity, which relieves; the sympathy, which feels; the affability, which endears; the justice, which does no injury; (all this is common, because all this is easy) they possess those substantial virtues, which the wisdom of the saints deemed the sole claims to future happiness,—chastity, that shrinks from the slightest danger of contagion;—fervor, that lives on prayer;—compunction, that feeds on tears;—severity, that is cruel to self-love; charity, that stints nature to supply the wants of poverty. Within the little circle, where myself have moved, I have known, and still know, several, whose virtues deserve these praises;—who appear possessed of passions, only to subdue them;—surrounded by pleasures, only to despise them;—who live only to



God, and to the interests of eternity. As for those ordinary qualities, which the world calls virtues—and which certainly are virtues,—I can appeal to the candour of every impartial protestant, that his catholic acquaintances, if he have any, who act up to the duties of their religion, possess these in a very superior degree;—are good parents; good friends; good citizens,—upright in their dealings; generous in their benevolence; affable in their conversation; sincere in all their conduct.

If it did not exceed the limits of a discourse, which I feel I have extended too much already, I could place before you many other attestations besides those which I have produced, of the holiness of the catholic church. I could produce a very splendid attestation of it, in the conduct of the French priesthood, and of an immense body of the French people; during the horrors of the late unhappy revolution;—above sixty thousand members of the clergy; above an equal number of the members of religious orders; above a hundred thousand cloistered females, renouncing, in the first instance, all the endearments of their situations, rather than abjure the obligations of their religion; and undergoing, in the second instance, from their attachment to their religion, the privations of poverty; the mockery of insult; the cruelty of persecution;—and often, the most cruel deaths. The laity, too, presented countless examples of the same pious and devoted heroism. But, I pass over all this,

however much it be calculated to illustrate what I have been establishing. I pass over also, that other striking proof of the holiness and divinity of the catholic church, that God has frequently conferred upon its members the power of performing miracles.—I pass over the honourable feature, that they were its professors, who alone, at various periods, and in the face of every form of danger, have conveyed the light of faith into the shades of pagan nations. I pass over these, and several similar attestations of the holiness of the catholic church, assured, that what I have stated, is enough to convince *you*, my brethren, that it possesses all those claims to be revered, as divine, which are appended to the signification, or to the attribute of sanctity;—enough to convince *our adversaries*, that if indeed their prejudices will not revere it as divine, they should respect it as venerable, and very undeserving those insults which they incessantly teem out against it;—enough to convince *all* were all only candid, that the catholic church is holy;—consequently the church instituted by Jesus Christ.

Whilst, my beloved friends, I placed before you the portrait of our great establishment, and shewed you that its paths are the road that conducts to heaven, the road, in which the good and great, in every age, have advanced to future happiness,—no doubt, the first feelings which you experienced, were feelings of satisfaction at your own security:—you felt happy to behold, that by a distinguishing mercy, you are placed

in the same sacred track. Certainly the feeling of security, which every catholic must entertain, when he contemplates the features of his church, and his own situation in it, must be dear to his reason, and consoling to his sensibility. We belong, my brethren to the church of the saints:—we live, and delightfully feed in those pastures which Christ Jesus has watered with the streams of eternal life. Well, but what are the conclusions that I chiefly wish you to deduce from the pleasing circumstance? The first conclusion that naturally rises out it, and which I seriously recommend to your attention, is this,—that you be grateful to God, who, without any deservings in you, has selected you, amid millions of your fellow-creatures, to be the sheep of his sacred fold. Gratitude,—a very feeling gratitude,—is the first tribute that piety suggests for the important favour. But the conclusion that I wish you still more to deduce from it,—and which, too, is the proper effect of gratitude itself, is this,—that being the members of a church which is holy, you live holily;—being the associates with the saints in your belief, you imitate the example of the saints in the conduct of your lives. This is the leading conclusion that I wish you to deduce from the happy circumstance of your vocation. In reality, without this conclusion, your vocation to the true church is hardly an advantage. It is rather a misfortune, and a source of a heavier condemnation,—implying the contempt of grace, and the neglect of the most valuable talent



that is confided to your improvement. The essence of religion is holiness of life. Without this, according to the words of my text, "*We love God only in words, and in tongue.*" Therefore, my brethren, seeing that you are the members of a church which is holy, see that you cultivate holiness. Professing the doctrines of perfection, see that you make those doctrines the rules of all your conduct. Let them inspire, direct, and animate all you do, and all that you desire,—your obligations to the divinity; your functions in society; your duties to your families,—your hopes and fears; your joys and afflictions; your trials and temptations. This alone is being really catholic. This alone is "*Loving God in deed, and in truth*"—and, alone, of course, aspiring consistently to that happiness, which the mercy of the Almighty has prepared for you in his eternal kingdom.

#### SERMON IV.

#### ON THE WANT OF HOLINESS IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

*My little children, let us love, not in words, nor in tongue; but in deed, and in truth.*—1st Ep. St. John, iii. 18.

IN the discourse which I delivered last Sunday, I placed before you the claims which the catholic church possesses to the characteristic of holiness. I did it indeed very superficially. But the superficial delineation which I gave, was enough, I flatter myself, to convince you that its claims are solid. It remains for me, to-day, to expose also, the claims which the protestant establishments present to the same sacred appendage of the true religion. In doing this, I feel forcibly, how much it will behove me to bear constantly in my recollection, the charitable maxim of my text; and to be careful, that whilst I am making professions of love, "*in words and in tongue,*" I do not violate it "*in deed and in truth.*" The nature of my subject will render this care peculiarly necessary,—including,

as it does, a variety of reflections upon objects which the partiality of our dissenting brethren has been cradled to revere,—the establishment of the reformation, the lives, doctrines, &c. of the reformers. My subject compels me to describe these objects, and my descriptions will compel me to censure them.

You are aware, my brethren, that to reconcile such descriptions, and above all, the censures appended to them, with the nice influences of charity, is extremely difficult. It is difficult to reconcile things, which in their bearings are so dissimilar;—censure, whose character is severity, with charity, whose character is tenderness. The defence of religion should be, like religion itself—kind. Religion condemns more the violation of charity, than she reprobates the misfortune of error. Hence is zeal often—if not in general, —dangerous;—so easily does it, if it glow in an ardent temper, transgress the boundaries of moderation, and in defending the laws of truth, infringe the rules of love. This indeed is an evil—a tribute to human weakness,—which, (I say it with regret,) we have sometimes to lament in the most eloquent defenders of the best of causes. So true it is, that we carry our infirmities with us, into whatever we undertake.

However, although indeed these reflections be true; and it be difficult to reconcile censure with charity, let us hope, that it is not impossible to reconcile it. There is a species of censure, which is even an act of charity. Such is that, which tends to stay the contagion of



vice, and to reform the mischiefs of error;—where the manner, also, of applying it, is conformable to the dictates of wisdom. On these occasions, censure, though even it be animated and severe, is no violation of the laws of charity. We trace such censure, frequently, in the language of our benevolent Redeemer; in the conduct of his apostles; and in the writings of a multitude of the saints.

Such, and regulated by such principles, shall be—it is, at least, my design—the nature of the censure, which I shall have sometimes to pass, in the series of this discourse. Leaning upon the basis of truth, and having the promotion of truth for its only aim, it shall be guided by the suggestions of benevolence. I should be certainly a very bad defender of a good cause—and above all, of the cause of religion, if I sought to promote it by insults. I should be even an injurious defender—because the natural effect of insult is, not to persuade, but to excite disgust. Perish that zeal, which is not charitable.

Not, however, my brethren, that I expect, either with these professions of charity, or with all my precautions to obey its dictates—not that I expect, that our adversaries will deem me charitable. I know the affection, which, from ignorance and habit, the protestants in general entertain for protestantism; and the aversion, which, from misconception and prejudice, they conceive for catholicity. Such men, I feel it, will consider my censures of the former, as a breach

of charity; and my commendations of the latter, as the effect of partiality. Error is dear to a multitude of individuals. And to these, truth, however it be told,—whether softened by mildness, or hung round with evidences,—is always painful and disagreeable. But, it is not to such, that to-day I propose to address myself. I address myself *to you*, my brethren, who have received the inheritance of the truth, and who love it;—and to such of my protestant brethren, who, not indeed like you, have been so happy as to have received the inheritance of the truth—are yet, so happy as to desire it, and so wise as to seek it. I address myself—if there be such in this assembly—to these: and these, I confidently hope, will find me charitable;—will find me, though perhaps sometimes animated—liberal.

Having premised these observations, which arose naturally from my text, and which also are a proper introduction to the sequel of my discourse, I hasten to the discussion of the objects, which I have announced as the subjects of this day's consideration—*the titles, which the protestant churches present to the attribute of holiness*. In order to discuss these with consistency—since the plan of my discourses is to institute a comparison—I must place before your reason the same, or similar kind of objects, and pursue the same line of argumentation which I did, in my last discourse. I must describe *the methods* by which the reformation was established; and the *characters of the men*, whose talents planned, and whose industry contributed chief-

ly to its establishment. I must exhibit a short delineation of its *doctrines*, and point out a few of the many *effects* which resulted from its introduction. These are the objects which correspond to those, that I have discussed already. And let me, too, say it by anticipation,—they are objects, which, when placed by the side of the former, present so different a spectacle—so strange a contrast—that not prejudice itself, if prejudice would view it steadily—could mistake the inference, which rising spontaneously from it, offers itself to the understanding.

I. A reformation, then, my brethren, you know it, in its general acceptation, is a return, or conversion, from the ways of vice and error, to the paths of virtue and truth. It implies in the order of religion, the operation of divine grace; and is the greatest blessing—being the foundation of future happiness—which heaven can confer upon the individual, who is favoured with it. Such are your ideas—and they are correct—of the nature of a reformation in general. Well, transfer these ideas to the nature of the reformation of the church—for the reformation of the church, though very different in its importance from the reformation of an individual, is yet, in its occasion, causes, operations and effects, very similar, or exactly similar, to it. The reformation of the church implies, necessarily, the supposition, that the church had degenerated from its pristine holiness, and departed from the principles of truth; and it signifies, that, by an ex-



traordinary intervention and effect, of the divine beneficence, it has been regenerated to the pure maxims of genuine piety, and again reconducted to the original doctrines of revelation. Indeed, the above supposition is alledged by the reformers themselves, as the *motive*—the above signification, as the very *definition* of the reformation.

It is not here the place, my brethren, to shew you, that the pretended corruption of the church, which was the pretext for reforming it, is groundless and illusive—involving in itself an insult to our great Redeemer, and the bold conclusion, that his promises and engagements are not binding.—(Our Redeemer, you all recollect it, had very formally promised to protect his church; and positively engaged “*to remain with it, all days to the end of the world.*”)—I am here to set these, and all such like assurances aside; and for a time, with the protestant, to admit the protestant supposition, that the church had indeed departed from the maxims of revelation, and was sunk,—deeply sunk—as he asserts, into the pollutions of vice, and the abominations of idolatry. I am to suppose, that the morals of its members were depraved; the doctrines of its creed corrupted; the practices of its discipline superstitious. I am to suppose, and will suppose all this. I am also, in the next place, to suppose, and will, equally, again suppose, that God had in his great mercy designed to reform his church,—or rather that he had really reformed it,—had recalled mankind from

the paths of vice and error, to the ways of holiness and truth. You must feel, my brethren, that the supposition which I am making, implies a very singular act of the divine beneficence. It implies, in fact, the greatest act of the divine beneficence, which, after the original impartment of revelation, or the original institution of the church, the divine goodness could, in the most tender effusions of its liberality, confer upon mankind. Now, therefore, let me appeal to your notions of religion;—let me appeal to your sense of piety;—let me appeal to the mere instincts of your reason,---what ought evidently or naturally to be the features that should recommend the communication of so great a blessing,---what the circumstances that should attend it? Doubtlessly you suppose that every thing should correspond to its holiness, and to the holiness of the Being who confers it,—that all should be holy, where holiness is to be re-conquered and re-established, under the guidance of the God of Holiness.—At least such, when I consult my own apprehensions of the aptitude of things, are the suggestions which they whisper to my reason. Every thing, it then seems to me, that is pure, and wise, and perfect, should be pressed into the execution of so sacred a design:---virtue go hand in hand with truth; and the excellence of the revolution be sensible in its effects. In reality, a revolution such as that which we are now supposing, is, equivalently, the introduction of a new religion;—for the true religion, it was urged, and is urged still,

by the advocates of the reformation,—was lost,—entirely lost,—in the darkness of corruption and infidelity. Therefore, should it be ushered in with incontestible attestations of its divinity. The evidences, which are required to justify the belief of a new religion, should be strong and clear indeed;—should be very different from those, which justify the belief of a religion, which has, for many ages, been established. The hand of God, on such an occasion, should be visible, and his voice loud and distinct. Reason, before it believe, should recur to those principles and precedents, which the divine wisdom has established as the rules of prudence, to secure society from imposition. But, at all events,—to give the widest latitude to the notions of a reformation,—if by a reformation we are to understand the re-establishment of truth and piety, formed under the authority and with the sanction of the divinity,—let me say this, that it is not easy to suppose, that such reformation would be conducted by disorder, and promoted by licentiousness;—not easy to imagine, that God would employ in so sacred a commission, individuals whose lives were vicious:—not easy to believe, that what was meant to be the parent of truth and piety, should prove, in its propagation, the prolific source of fresh errors, and increased corruption. Not even prejudice itself, with the loosest notions of the properties or proprieties of things, can entertain so unwise an idea of the nature of a religious reformation.



Having, therefore, endeavoured to give you a general idea of the import of a reformation, and suggested a few general maxims, by which, when a reformation is established, its divinity may be ascertained, I proceed now, by the light of that idea, and of these maxims, to discuss the claims, which the great revolution, denominated by the protestant, *the reformation*, presents to that sacred title;---or, which is nearly the same thing---to the characteristic of *holiness*.

The first circumstance, which, in my last discourse, I considered as the characteristic of the holiness of the true church, and as the characteristic of the holiness of the catholic church, was the *method of its establishment*. This, certainly, as I then remarked, is an essential feature in the divinity of a sacred institution, and an obvious medium to ascertain it. And what, therefore, were the *methods* to which the protestant reformation owes its establishment? My brethren, were I a protestant, trained to venerate the reformation, yet ignorant of the methods by which it grew---no doubt, conceiving it to be the work of the divine beneficence, I should also conceive, that the methods by which it grew, and to which it owed its establishment, would be necessarily holy:---conceiving the reformation to be the brightest day, that, after the first dawn of christianity, has beamed upon the world, I should also conceive, that the morning, which ushered it in, would have been calm, beautiful and serene. Renew, then, your attention, whilst we take

a view of the methods which prepared, and finally established the reformation.

Tracing back the little space of not yet three centuries, your memory brings you to a period, when the christian universe was at peace; when faith, with very few exceptions, was in all the enlightened parts of the christian universe, uniform and one; and when the state of public morals, though vitiated, was still less vitiated, than it is at present. At this period---it was, in the year 1517,---and in this state of things, Pope Leo the tenth, on the occasion of building the church of St. Peter, in Rome, granted to the members of the Dominican Order, the privilege of preaching an indulgence, in order, by the sums arising from the charitable donations which are made, on such occasions, to carry on the expensive undertaking. It is said, that some of the preachers were men of corrupted morals; and that in their discourses, they propagated errors, absurdities, and even impiety. The impeachments may be true, although wisdom will credit them with diffidence, because they come from adversaries. Armed, not yet perhaps, either with anger or ambition, but, it may be, with the honest ardor of religious zeal, behold! an obscure individual, from an obscure convent in Germany, presents himself to the public notice---not indeed censuring indulgences, nor denying their utility,---but blaming their abuses, and condemning the manner of their promulgation. It is often from little causes, that great effects proceed---as frequently, a spark is the cause of

the most dreadful conflagration. To the censure of the abuses of indulgences, Luther added, it is true, severe reflections on the characters of the men who propagated them, and on the lives of the clergy in general. It is very easy for abilities to impose on ignorance; above all, if to abilities, you suppose super-added, eloquence, and the cant of piety. Luther certainly had abilities---and abilities which were calculated to produce strong effects, on unpolished minds.--- They were, as described by himself and his admirers, rough, violent, coarse and impetuous: and as he employed them, only under the pretext of reforming abuses, he was listened to with interest, and applauded for his ardor. \*

Thus far merely, it is probable, the zeal of Luther had originally intended to have proceeded. He could not have foreseen, nor therefore have made any cal-

\* Luther often owns the violence of his own temper, and the coarseness of his own language. In the preface to his works, he assigns this general cause, and makes this general apology for the unfortunate circumstances,---a cause and an apology as absurd and indecent, as ever folly or extravagance suggested,---and a cause and apology; which, if reasonable, would justify any thing,---that "*he had been a papist and a monk!*" "*Oro,*" he says, "*pium Lectorem, ut ante, omnia, me legat cum multa miseratione; et sciat, me fuisse, aliquando, monachum, et papistism, &c.*"

Luther's admirers and historians unanimously attest the impetuosity, roughness, &c. of his character. The mild Melancthon tells us, that he used sometimes to *beat* him: "*apipso colaphos accepi;*" he says in his Letter, ad Theodorum.



caution for the subsequent events;---could not, in the wildest dreams of his ambition, have flattered himself, that the public credulity, more, even than his own violence, would raise him to the stupendous, but frightful eminence, which he soon afterwards attained.--- Events are frequently the creatures of accidents;--- and it is by these accidents, and by the progress and change of circumstances, that ambition regulates the measure, of its future conduct. Luther had, hitherto, declaimed only against the abuses of indulgences, and against men, among whom there were certainly many, who merited reproach. His zeal had met with approbation; and the approbation had flattered his self-love, or his ambition. He had, too, ascertained the temper of his hearers, and discovered that invective was gratifying to their passions. Animated, therefore, with increased confidence, he advanced forward another step. He now inveighed against the *use* of indulgences, and against those doctrines which are connected with the principle of indulgences. This, also, was applauded; and the applause added new violence to his former intemperance. His censures became more insolent; his raillery more pointed; his dogmatism more licentious; and he published theses that were pregnant with various errors. It is true he did here, with hypocritical humility, appeal to the sovereign pontiff, expressing the most docile submission to his mandates. But the pontiff, neither satisfied

with his humility, nor his submission, deemed it wise to excommunicate him. It was in the year 1520.

The date of the excommunication of Luther, is properly the date of the great revolution, which its partizans have called the *Reformation*.\* Whether he had foreseen and courted the awful sentence, is not particularly material. But he made it the pretext and the signal of rebellion. He threw away, at its emission, all the remaining decencies of decorum. His boldness, and the novelty of his opinions—for novelty is always sure to please—had, at this period of his contest, excited a very general degree of interest; and, in Germany, principally, had gained him a considerable multitude of admirers. Among the vulgar, he was popular and beloved;—(*"The rebel,"* one of our poets justly remarks, "*always is the peo-*

\* "The first impulse of Leo," says the learned and impartial Mr. Roscoe, "was to soothe the turbulent priest, (Luther). . . . But his adversaries exasperated him to such a degree, that he began with an unsparing hand to lay waste all that seemed to oppose his course."

"The first measure adopted by Luther, in the publication of his Propositions, at Wittemberg, was sufficiently hostile to have justified the Pontiff in calling upon him for an unqualified submission; and in case of refusal or hesitation, to have separated him, as an infected limb from the body of the church."—*Life of Leo X.*—Mr. Roscoe frequently remarks, that Luther, on every occasion behaved with violence, artifice, &c.; whilst he equally observes, that on every occasion, Leo behaved with too great temperance and moderation.

*ple's saint;*")---and among the rich, he had acquired the support of several distinguished personages. He had likewise now fully ascertained, and perfectly convinced himself, with what facility the ignorant may be deceived; and when once deceived, with what ease they may be conducted and misled. During the interval of three years, he had been employed in artfully composing, and carefully laying a train made up of the most inflammable ingredients; and he now felt, that it needed but the torch to inkindle it to an explosion. Therefore, behold! he presents it! He now solemnly declares, that the Pope is Anti-christ! and that the church has no power to condemn his doctrines. And then,---this, my brethren, is the awful circumstance;---although only a private priest,---without mission, and without authority;\*---with no diploma, at least, to prove his mission and authority, but his own assertion---no voucher, but his own boldness---he publically pro-

\*"En, ut non ignoretis," he says, "appello me Ecclesiasten, Dei Gratia, et titulo insignivi ego meipsum. Et si Evangelistam etiam me, Dei Gratia, nominarem citius essem ostensurus. Certus sum enim, Christum ipsum me sic nominare."

In another place he says, "*I am the Evangelist sent by God, for the salvation of the world. Whoever does not obey me, despises Christ.*"—Lib. pro. schol. Erig.

"Open thine eyes," he exclaimed "*unhappy Germany! It is I, who bring to thee the light of heaven. My gospel is clearer and more evident than the gospel was, at the time of the apostles. Unhappy Germany! thou knewest nothing of the truth, before I taught thee.*"—In 500 Act. art. 355.



claims himself the envoy of Jesus Christ,---the apostle sent by God to reform the church; divinely commissioned to reinstruct mankind in the truths of revelation, and to re-conduct them to the paths of sanctity."---I will not pause here, to express my astonishment at the singular proclamation; nor to admire the still more singular credulity which revered it. Suffice it to say,---that however singular were both the proclamation and the credulity, they became,---and are---the basis of the most eventful revolution that the annals of time exhibit. An immense and numberless portion of the christian universe, heard the proclamation, and received it as *Divine!*\*

Therefore, my brethren, we are now to consider Luther, in the new capacity of an apostle: and contem-

\* There is hardly any term of praise, or appellation of sanctity, which the protestants have not profusely lavished upon Luther. They call him often "*a second Paul, a second Elias, a second Baptist, the trumpet of heaven, the mouth of God, the organ of the Holy Ghost; a man superior in wisdom and piety to the early fathers, &c. &c.*"

Says one of them---

Christus habet primas, habeas tibi, Paule, Secundas; Ast, loca post illos, proxima Luther habet."

Our English protestants give him nearly all the above titles. Dr. Rennel, in his Discourses, calls him "*the chosen instrument of God.*"

Even Calvin says of Luther, "*I say it without flattery, I consider Luther as the apostle of Jesus Christ.*" Query. If Luther be the apostle of Christ, what, then, is Calvin? *Luther excommunicated Calvin!*

plating him, in the holy career of reforming mankind, we are to remark *the methods*, which he employs to effect it,—for *the methods* of establishing a religion, are—I have said—striking testimonials of its divinity. And, what are the methods that he employs?—Alas! My beloved friends, do not look here for the usual methods, by which, on every other occasion, the cause of religion has been promoted. Do not expect to find, that the plans of the apostle Luther were formed upon the plans of the first apostles of Jesus Christ. Every thing in the establishment of the reformation was a departure from holy precedent. Every thing was *revolutionary*, in the fiercest acceptation of this term. The reformation was a *revolution*, distinguished by the same spirit of fermentation and excess; the same spoliations and injustices; the same hatreds and animosities, which have marked the worst changes in civil governments. It was the combat of party against power; and the triumph,—where it did triumph,—of passion over piety. One leading method, by which Luther and his associates, for he had now selected several colleagues to aid him in the holy work,—promoted the reformation, was the violence of invective. “*Such,*” says Erasmus, “*was the energy, with which they employed this strong spring of action, that you might see the men who had been attending their discourses, retire from them, like beings possessed by the evil*

*spirit---fire in the eye, and ferocity in the face.*”\* To the violence of their public discourses, they united, in private, the secret but powerful influences of intrigues, conspiracies and cabals. So that the history of the first establishments of the reformation, is the history of little else but seditions, factions and civil wars,---accompanied by all the horrors which are usually and naturally appended to such misfortunes. Melancthon acknowledges, and complains frequently of these evils, lamenting pathetically, the violent and sanguinary dispositions of the conductors of the new reform:---not reflecting,---good man! that the violence, though reli-

\* The following passages are specimens of Luther’s spirit and eloquence. “*If men hang the thief upon the gallows; if they put to death the robber; if they condemn to the flames the heretic,---with how much greater reason, should we attack and destroy these leaders of perdition,---these cardinals, these popes, this entire sink of the popish Sodom? Why not assail them with every kind of arms, and wash our hands in their blood?*”---Tom. 1. Ed. Wit. p. 195.

In his address to one of the princes of the league, he tells him: *You have more merit in shedding the blood of the papists, than others have in praying.*”---Lib. ad Rust.

And if, in like manner, we were to consult the language of many other leaders of the reformation, we should trace the same sanguinary style. Not the most furious discourses of the most furious French demagogues, at the worst period of the late revolution, were more sanguinary, than those of Zuinglius, Mun-  
cer, &c.



giously wrong in the christian, was politically wise,---because necessary,---in the reformer.\*

To the aid of violence and intrigue, Luther also called in a variety of other artifices,---all those mean auxiliaries, by which revolutions are brought about; and the minds of men most easily seduced from the piety and principles of their early habits. In order to conciliate the good-will of the *vulgar*,---after deeply impressing their minds (this is the stale expedient of every revolutionist) with the idea, that zeal for the public good was the sole motive of all his conduct;---after inveighing against the restraints of the papal power, and assuring them, that all the weight of catholic obligations were but the incroachments of papal tyranny; after inculcating these, and a variety of maxims such as these,---he then, enthusiastically, preached to them the enchanting doctrines of liberty; declared them emancipated by the laws of the gospel, from all control; and laid open to them, as the real path to heaven, a path the most flowery, the most

\* In his German address to the people, Luther excites them "to a general insurrection against the pope and the popish clergy;---to lay waste their bishoprics; to abolish their government, &c. &c." How well the people complied with this address, and what excesses and profanations attended their compliance, it is very easy to imagine. The horrors of the French revolution were an image and repetition of them. Claudius Conrad says, that "in Franconia alone, besides the destruction of the religious establishments, the reformers pulled down the seats and castles of above three hundred of the catholic nobility."

delightful and commodious, that either sensuality could desire, or that passion could invent. "*Only believe;*" said the good natured and sanctified apostle, "*and, without the load of fasts, and the mortification of abstinences; without the pain of confession, and the hardship of good works, depend upon it, you will be saved;—you are even as secure of salvation, as is Jesus Christ himself.—Yes,*" he added—"sin, and sin boldly; **ONLY BELIEVE**, and your faith, although you commit fornication, or perpetrate murder, a thousand times a day—your faith shall save you."<sup>\*</sup> Who does not feel, that doctrines of this description, incessantly inculcated in his discourses and writings, and inculcated with ardor, enthusiasm and ability,---addressed to men of great ignorance and strong passions,---and coming also from one, whom they respected as the friend and envoy of the Almighty,---who does not feel, that they were calculated to produce effect? Certainly, they were calculated to produce effect; because it is the unhappy interest of the passions,---the persuasive and eloquent influencers of human actions,---to cherish and believe such doctrines.

In order to establish his reformation among the

<sup>\*</sup> See Luther's works, *Passim*. Neither are the above opinions respecting faith and good works, peculiar to Luther. They are the doctrines of the leaders of the reformation. Mosheim remarks, that "*the warm friend of Luther and the zealous defender of his doctrines, Amsdorff, maintained that good works are even impediments to salvation.*"—Cent. 16.

*great*,---after having suppressed a multitude of convents, and seized upon the revenues of the clergy, he tempted with the offer, or the gift, of large portions of these, their avarice, or their ambition. And it was with this gratification, chiefly, that he succeeded in securing the support of several princes, and in obtaining the protection of the rich. It was, also, to promote the reformation, by ensuring to it the substantial aid of a powerful potentate, that, by a violation of morals more indecent than the above spoliations, Luther,---and with Luther, several of his leading colleagues,---permitted him to indulge his lust, by the enjoyment of two wives, at once! \*

\* See the account of this scandalous transaction, in the sixth book of Boffuet's Variations. It appears that Philip, the Landgrave of Hess,---a man of an herculean constitution, and of violent passions; and of a constitution and passions, that were inflamed by good living and excess,---unable and unwilling to satisfy his lust with the possession of a single wife, applied to Luther and his colleagues, to be gratified with a second. In an uncouth address to Luther, composed in barbarous Latin, he honestly tells him, that "*his inclination, his will, and his constitution, absolutely require, that he should have two wives; and that therefore it was necessary for him, (Luther,) to find out some method of reconciling together his wants and his religion.*" Luther lays, immediately, the case and the instrument, before his fellow doctors at Wittemberg. And what do they piously decide? Why, that for the sake of the gospel,---though the gospel abhors it;---for the good of religion,---though religion and nature reprobate it;---they decide---good-natured, humane, and holy men!--"*that he might indeed, take two wives, PROVIDED THAT HE WOULD DO IT SECRETLY!*"



In order to establish his reformation among *the clergy*, and among the pious inhabitants of the cloister, he declared that the vow of celibacy, and all other monastic vows, are not binding; that they are even unnatural and superstitious fetters, forged by bigotry, and rivetted on by tyranny. He eloquently and urgently called upon all to break them, with contempt, asunder; threw open the doors of convents; and exhibiting in himself the animating example of emancipation, by marrying a beautiful female—a nun!—he invited all to imitate him. Where passion is not under the strong control of purity; and where purity is not under the strong control of grace, the observance, above all, of the vow of celibacy, is an arduous obligation,—an obligation which passion is for ever tempted to reject. Hence, as Picart remarks, *“the permission which Luther gave for priests to marry, was what,*

The instrument containing the important decision, was signed by Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, and some other leading apostles of the reformation. The authentic papers, discovering this mystery of iniquity, were published in the year 1679, by the Elector Palatine, Charles Lewis, a descendant of the above Philip. “But,” says Picart, who, I have remarked, is a protestant—*“the above instrument, which was thus flattered the passions of the Landgrave, is not the only part of Luther’s works that favour polygamy. He approves of polygamy in other places: and Lyserus, in his book entitled Polygymia Triumphatrix, has employed several passages from Luther to establish his doctrine.”* But; what a remedy this, for incontinency; and what a means of cementing piously and strongly, the divine basis of a reformation!

*most effectually, contributed to promote the reformation."* It was this circumstance, which gave the reformation its teachers and apostles. "*And,*" says Erasmus, noticing the expedient, and its powerful influence, "*it is curious to trace the progress of the new reform. Whilst it, every where, in its scenes of violence, presents the deep solemnity of a tragedy,—it every where, in its scenes of liberty, displays at the same time, the gay licentiousness of a comedy. Every thing, as it does in a comedy, ends in marriage.*"\*

Such, my brethren, as they are admitted and described by the protestants themselves, were the chief methods by which the reformation grew; and to which it owes its permanent establishment. Its platform is violence; its superstructure, the work of passion. I do not fear any contradiction from whoever is acquainted with the history of protestantism, when I assert, that there is not one protestant establishment, in one nation of Europe, which does not owe its institution, strength and stability, to the intrigues of pas-

\* "These Gospellers," says Erasmus, "enlightened by the Holy Ghost, want but two things—money and women. The rest, the gospel furnishes abundantly. They differ among themselves in regard to their belief;—each individual nearly has his private belief. But, in regard to Bacchus and Venus, they all agree. They have declared open war against fasting and chastity. I have seen an apostate monk with three wives; and a reformed priest espoused to a married woman. The example is common of monks and nuns repudiating each other, with the same levity, with which they had married each other."—Ad. Frat. Inf. Germ.

sion, and to the force of arms. The sects, which have not had these agents, to promote, and these buttresses to support them, have either, like fire under the ashes, languished unobserved, and perhaps died away (their cradle has been their grave) or else, like the worm in the bit of wood, they have lived confined and imprisoned, in the little hole which gave them birth.

But, since, in my last discourse, I described to you the establishment of catholicity in this nation, it is proper, as we are making comparisons, that I should present to you its counter part, by describing also the establishment of the reformation, which superseded it. If, my brethren, you be not acquainted with the history of that transaction, you may very naturally imagine, from the circumstance of our national character, which is distinguished for its moderation and good sense, that in this country at least; the establishment of the reformation would be conducted, if not with the spirit of piety, certainly with the spirit of decorum.—Indeed, as it was professedly the re-establishment of piety, it should have been conducted in the spirit of piety. But at all events, you are prepared, if you be ignorant of our history, to conceive, that temperance and propriety would strikingly mark its progress. Illusive expectations!—I am sorry, for the sake of catholicity,---sorry, for the sake of my country's honour,---sorry, for the sake of the pretended reform itself,---there was nothing moderate, even in this seat of moderation, that ushered in the reformation;---nothing



decorous;—nothing temperate;—nothing, still less, canonical;—and, to complete the climax,—nothing, yet less than all, that was sanctified and holy. Every thing, as it was in the establishment formed by Luther, was a dereliction of ancient precedent, and the work of passion.

You very properly suppose---and the thing is obviously wise---that the reformation of religion should always be conducted by the authority of religious men,---or, in other words, that the ministers of the church, from the nature of their character, are the proper instruments to reform the church, when its reformation is become essential. The most slender knowledge of the principles of religion, makes this proposition incontestible. And who were the individuals that planned and planted the reformation in this country? Were they the members of the priesthood---clergymen?---My brethren, you will remark, that here I am speaking of the *real authors* of the reformation in this country.---I answer, No:---No, they were not clergymen. The real authors of the establishment of the reformation in this country, were the tyrant Henry, instigated by the rage of lust, and aided by the layman Cromwell, animated by the love of lucre:---the child Edward, the dupe of ignorance, conducted by the sanguinary Somerset, the victim of ambition:---the woman Elizabeth, prompted by human policy, and assisted in her councils by the profligate Leicester, and the artful Cecil. Such were the real authors of our English

reformation, and such the sources from which flowed all the authority, by which its establishment was adjusted. There were, indeed, a multitude of subordinate agents, whose characters,—many of them—have, like those of their employers, been handed down to us by our historians, black with the infamy of guilt. Now, as it is easy to judge of the conduct of an individual from the general outline of his character, so it is easy, from the well-known features of the men whom I have mentioned, to judge, what must have been the methods by which they promoted the new reform. Appealing to these methods, as they are related by protestant historians,—by Heylin, Collier, Stowe, &c. we find that they were violent and tyrannical; profane and sacrilegious.

That such was the character of the conduct of Henry, and of the panders of his passions, is a truth, that will readily be admitted. Henry was a tyrant stained with crimes; “*and such,*” says Heylin, “*was the rapacity of the times, and of the men who surrounded the tyrant, that they carried the rapine of the church to the greatest degree of sacrilege.*” Whatever progress the reformation made under Henry, either by the rejection of the papal power, or by any other method, all was the dictate of caprice and passion, and the effect of violence.—*Under Edward*, the progress of the reformation was considerably accelerated; but, it was accelerated, chiefly by the impulse of the same mediums, by which Henry had begun it. Between the

character of Henry, the parent of the English reformation, and the character of Somerset, its foster-father, there were, in point of cruelty and ambition, very slender shades of difference. Both of them were tyrants; and both of them employed the exertions of their tyranny in forwarding the holy work of the reformation. "*Under Edward*," Heylin observes, "*catholicity was the religion of the people; and the wish of the clergy: yet*," he adds, "*protestants were intruded upon the nation by the parliament;—by a parliament*," he adds again, "*that was sold to the protector, and which voted for the reformation, only for fear of losing such church lands as they were possessed of.*" And, hence, says Echard, "*the reign of Edward was weak, and tumultuous; defamed by sacrilege and distracted by factions.*"—*Under Elizabeth*, the same methods were employed to give stability to the reformation, which had, hitherto, promoted and accelerated it. Elizabeth,—many of our historians have noticed it,—was a protestant, not from principle, but from policy and revenge. However, be that as it may, she certainly was the chief foundress of protestantism, in this country. It was her will, that dictated the plan; and her industry, that reared the edifice, as it stands at present.—And, behold the means which she used to rear it. She imprisoned all the bishops, with the exception of one;—she enacted the most sanguinary laws against the clergy;—she seized upon the revenues of the church;—and chusing for her ministers, a set of men, whom,



nor humanity, nor justice could control,—“a ministry,” says one of our historians, (Higgon) “*the most wicked that has been known in any reign,*” she enforced, through their agency, a series of artifice and cruelty; of sacrilege and perfidy, from which modern liberality, and modern piety, would shrink with horror and disgust.\* To these arts of advancing the new religion, were added all those subsidiary means, which I have mentioned and blamed so often;—sermons, to inflame the public mind;—satires, to create aversion;—calumnies, dark as malevolence could invent. Thus, by persecuting the old religion, and cheating the credulity of the public;—by substituting, at the same time, a more commodious system of religion, and flattering the bad passions of the heart,---Elizabeth succeeded in raising upon the ruins of catholicity, the fabric, which now we denominate the *Church of England*,---a fabric composed of different materials, and differently put together, from any other protestant establishment in the universe.

\* Dr. Whitaker has eloquently described the characters of Elizabeth and her ministers; and, very accurately, appreciated the features of her reign. “Elizabeth,” says the doctor, “could have induced herself, either to continue a catholic, or to adopt the creed of the church of England, or to take up the wild worship of the puritans;—just as the scale of her interest inclined. The voice of her subjects was for the second. She, therefore, became a mother to religion, and to the church. Yet, her regard for either was not sufficient to keep her from acts of oppression to the one, and of outrage to the other. She was busy, throughout

It would be useless to relate the methods by which in any other nations, any other sects of the reformation formed their establishments. Suffice it to say, that wherever these establishments are powerful and considerable, and erected upon the platform of the ancient institute, their reformation was regulated entirely upon the plans of those, which I have delineated. There was, every where, the same subversion of order, decency, and moderation. Professing, all of them, only to reform religion; and to remedy its disorders, yet did they all, on all occasions, display the same want of feeling for the pretended malady, and the same want of tenderness in the application of the pretended cure. It was never with a trembling hand, that they undertook to cut off what they called the dead, or infected member. With savage satisfaction, they every where exulted in every horrid art of wounding and insulting the sacred "spouse of Jesus Christ."

From the above statements of the modes of propagating the reformation, I might present to your consideration a variety of serious reflections and impor-

her whole reign, in robbing the church of its possessions, by every trick of sacrilegious imposition, and sacrilegious authority, that she could play off against it. Her private life also was stained with gross licentiousness. Her politics were but one vast system of chicanery and wrong, to all about her. . . . She and her ministers triumphed in the happy inventiveness of their souls for mischief; exulted over their long and laboured trains of misery; making themselves the very deamons of vengeance to all, within the sphere of their activity. &c." *Vindication of Queen Mary.*

tant inferences. The subject is peculiarly pregnant with them. However, I will only here deduce this one very natural inference from them. It is this,---that if indeed the reformation be the work of God, and an act of his beneficence,---it is an act, which in every feature, differs from every other act of his beneficence, which he has, on every other occasion, exhibited to mankind. It is the only act of his beneficence, in which he establishes religion by violence, and holiness by impiety. I do not know what sensations the history of the establishment of the reformation may produce in the mind of a protestant; but it appears to me, that were I a protestant, and calmly viewed the manner in which it was conducted, and the characters of the men by whom it was conducted, my sensibility would be feelingly hurt; my apprehensions tremblingly alive to the striking prospects. Abstracting even from the multiplicity of objectionable circumstances, which mark and disgrace that revolution,---this circumstance alone would alarm my security, that, amid all the various institutions which it created, there is not one which it created in the bosom of peace, or at a period of moderation. They are all of them the offspring of violence,---the creatures of storms and whirlwinds.

II. I proceed in the second place, to give you a superficial account of the *doctrines* of the reformation. Doctrines are the second test, which, when explaining the claims of catholicity, I submitted to your consideration; and are a speaking attestation of the sanctity



or the profaneness of the establishment which professes them. "*They are,*" to use, again the words of Dr. Rennel, "*the vital substance of the church: without which a church is a dead and putrid carcase cumbering the ground, on which it is placed.*" The doctrines of the true religion are essentially true and holy. The principle is universal:---and it was the pretended necessity of giving back to religion the lost truth and holiness of its doctrines, that, at the period of the reformation, was alledged, as the sole motive of that extraordinary revolution.

Perhaps, my brethren, you have already conceived, from the portrait which I have delineated, of the *methods* of establishing the reformation, that purity of faith, and holiness of doctrine, did not constitute very prominent features in the beauty of the new institution. The fermentation of the period, and the arts that were employed to create prejudice against the old religion; ---but above all, the leading maxim of the new religion, which made every individual the arbiter of his own belief,---these circumstances rendered such features, morally speaking, impossible. Where, acting under the operation of such causes, men cast away their old opinions to adopt new ones, they are sure to act with violence; and in rejecting imaginary errors, to rush precipitately into real errors. They usually on such occasions, throw every thing from them, that they had believed before, as far away as possible. They keep nothing, (to use a familiar phrase) that they can help;

nothing hardly analogous to their former tenets. They almost reject evidence itself, merely because once they had been wise enough to venerate it. In reality, it requires very little acquaintance either with the nature of the human mind, or with the history of human events, to know, that when men once begin to dogmatise and err,—the progress of error, and particularly of religious error, is rapid in the extreme. Religious error, generated frequently by the workings of the strongest passions of the heart, or the strongest fancies of the head, is a fever;—and a fever peculiarly violent;—a fever, too, unfortunately, which loving the society of weak and feverish constitutions, communicates its poison, and diffuses its infection, with a rapidity, which no antidote can stay, no power of medicine counteract.

The above is the history of the state of the public mind, at the era of the reformation. At that era, the rage for dogmatism, had inflamed it to a fever. All was enthusiasm; ardor and fanaticism. Immense multitudes, not only of the learned, but of the ignorant also, became teachers, doctors and apostles. The codes and forms of faith were, consequently, numberless.\* Every thing was deemed wise and true, that

\*Pantaleon, Functius, Lantherus, Lindan, &c. have enumerated above two hundred regularly organised reformed religions. There existed, even in the time of Luther, thirty-four sects of Lutherans each professing to follow Luther as its apostle. But in fact, almost every protestant,—Luther himself complained,—believed as he pleased: and there, consequently, were nearly as many creeds, as there were protestants.

was a departure from the ancient tenets. Indeed, so great was the love of novelty, and the zeal for change, that, without offering any violence to the rules of language, I might call them a madness, or delirium. The wonder almost is,—so violent were their effects,—that in rushing from what was, now, vilified by the name of popery, men did not precipitate themselves into paganism. They did often,—you easily conceive it,—precipitate themselves into impiety.

But, you are here, I dare say, prepared to remark, that, “in regard to the false and unholy doctrines, to which I have just alluded, as resulting from the principles, and from the establishment of the reformation,—that, although, indeed, it were true, that such doctrines were extremely common—yet, they were the doctrines, either of the vulgar only, or of unimportant individuals. Surely, you will say, they could not have been the doctrines of the apostles of the great reform,—of the men, whom the protestant reveres, as *“the organs of the divine wisdom, and the instruments of the divine mercy!”* Men, doubtlessly, of this description, at least, must have been free from the imputation of having taught any impious or unholy doctrines!” Certainly, my brethren, you reason right:—you have reason to suppose, when, either you consider the presumed characters of the reformers, or the eulogies which the protestants have profusely bestowed upon them,—you have reason to suppose, that they had not—could not—have taught any unholy doctrines.—



*“The organs of the divine wisdom, and the instruments of the divine mercy,”*—deputed immediately to instruct and reform mankind, could not have taught any doctrines, but such as are true and holy. If it can be proved, that they did teach any, which were not such, then, I think it plain,—I think there is no proposition in reason more certain;—no demonstration in mathematics more evident, than this,—*that therefore they were not* “the organs of the divine wisdom, nor the instruments of the divine mercy:”---but, impostors,---corrupters of the word of God,—or fanatics, at best, in the sacred mantle of religion.

The men, you all know it, who were the chief apostles of the reformation, and whom the protestant reveres, as the delegates of the Almighty,—“the organs of his wisdom, and the instruments of his mercy,”—were Luther and Calvin. The codes of the doctrines of these men are exceedingly different from each other;—proof, that both of them are not divine, since the spirit of truth is *one*. But, this argument apart:—the codes of the doctrines of these men are very copious and diffuse. Opposed to the doctrines which it was their pretended object to correct, and including, moreover, a variety of tenets superadded to the corrections, they are of course more copious and diffuse than the code of catholicity;—consequently, again, they are too copious and diffuse to be detailed within the limits of this discourse. I must content myself with presenting to you a few only of their multifarious dogmas. From

a few, you may judge correctly of many others; and from them determine, as well as from a multiplicity, the character of the claims, which they possess to the title of *holiness*.

I have already alluded to one of the leading doctrines of the apostle Luther,—that “*without good works, faith alone is sufficient to procure salvation.*”<sup>\*†</sup> This principle the reformer carries through a great variety of bearings and conclusions, as offensive,—some of them,—to piety, as is the principle itself;—such as, that “*God does not regard good works;*”<sup>†</sup>—that “*there is no value in good works;*”<sup>‡</sup>—that “*we ought not to perform good works;*”<sup>||</sup>—that “*all works are equal in the eyes of God.*”<sup>§</sup> “We have now learnt, says Andra as, alluding to these doctrines of his master,—that *faith alone suffice to give salvation;—that fasting, alms-deeds, and prayer, are quite superfluous; and therefore we allow the faithful to give up such practices.*”<sup>¶</sup> My brethren, I need not say, that to your notions of piety, or even to the mere instincts of virtue, doctrines like these cannot seem *holy*.

Another of the prominent tenets, in the creed of Luther,—and which, unhappily, for the rule of morals, was very generally adopted,—was this,—that “*all the commandments of God, are alike impossible.*”<sup>\*\*</sup> This

<sup>\*</sup> De Capt. Bab. and *passim*.

<sup>†</sup> De Capt. Bab.

<sup>‡</sup> In cap. 1. Jon .

<sup>||</sup> Postil: in Dom. 3. Advent.

<sup>§</sup> De Votis.

<sup>¶</sup> Conc. 4. in cap. 21. Luc.

<sup>\*\*</sup> De Libert. Tom. 2.

doctrine, while it is repugnant to the express words of the sacred scriptures,---while repugnant to the sentiments which we entertain of the divine wisdom, that it would not ordain impossibilities,---is evidently, also, not only a discouragement, but an absolute stay to every attempt to cultivate virtue. For, why attempt to cultivate what it is already supposed, or believed, is quite "impossible?"

The doctrines of Luther, respecting *sin*, form another part of his creed, which will not impress you with a very favourable notion of its tendency to promote the interests of holiness. *Sin*, according to this apostle, consists in nothing, *but disbelief*:---indeed, this opinion is only the natural result of his doctrines respecting faith. "*As faith alone*," he says, "*justifies; so the want of faith alone sins. Christ has appointed that there should be no sin, but disbelief.*"\* "*The sole danger, therefore*," he adds, "*of sin, is the bad example which it gives; because, as for the sin itself, it is forgiven soon as it is committed. The believer has received the pardon of all sins, past, present, and future.*"† What an inlet to corruption! what an apology for every species of profligacy!

It may, perhaps, be wrong to cite, in this sanctuary of purity, the reformer's tenets respecting the delicate virtue of chastity. "*Chastity*," he contends, "*is a virtue absolutely impossible;---as impossible, as the sustenance of life without meat and drink.*"‡ Hence, in

\*Lib. cont. Cathur.

†Serm.

‡Serm. in Mat.



compassion to this unfortunate inability, he approves and sanctions the most licentious liberties. He approves of "*fornication with the maid, when the wife thinks proper to withhold the nuptial debt.*"\* He approves of repeated marriages, in the case, not only of adultery, but of infirmity, or of the departure of either of the parties. "*So that,*" he says "*a man may have ten or more wives, living at the same time.*"† My brethren, your piety shrinks with disgust from such assertions. The man, that, alone, can approve them, must, like the man who made them,—be either a very corrupted sensualist, or a very fanatical enthusiast.

I might cite many other tenets, equally profane and disgusting as the above, did I not conceive, that what I have cited, are—while painful to your sensibility,—sufficient to attest the spirit of the pretended apostle. I might shew you, that he maintains, that *Liberty is an empty name*:"‡—that "*man is necessitated to the evil which he commits; and still punished for the commission, which he cannot prevent;*"||—that "*God works in us, both good and evil; and reprobates us for the evil, which himself produces.*"§ But enough:—these are desolating and despair-inspiring doctrines—doctrines, which to you, who have been trained to venerate the wisdom of the Almighty;—to consider his threats, as the prohibitions of vice; and his invitations, as the attractions to virtue,—must appear profane, impious and

\*Serm. de Mat. Si non vult uxor, aut non possit, veniat ancilla.

†Serm. de mat.

‡Tom. 2, fol. 111.

||Tom. 2, fol. 434.

§Tom. 2, fol. 444.

absurd. And yet, such are the doctrines of Luther, the supposed "organ of the divine wisdom," the reputed "instrument of the divine mercy." They are his and they are the doctrines, also,---as it is natural,---of a considerable portion of his followers and admirers.

The tenets of Calvin, whom the Calvinists respect with the same veneration, which the Lutherans, and the protestants, in general, bear to Luther,---are neither less profane nor less immoral;---neither impious, nor less absurd, than those which I have just recited. Let me, without any reflections on their tendency, which, indeed, is too palpable to need any reflections,---point out to you a few only of the multifarious maxims of his dreadful creed. Calvin teaches, like the arch-apostle Luther, that "*God is the author of sin*;"\* and that "*he necessitates man to sin*;"†---that "*it is possible to observe the commandments*;"‡---that "*man has no free will*;"||---that "*the most enormous crimes do not remove the grace of sanctification*;"§---that "*good works are devoid of merit*;"---the invention of the evangelical counsels, preposterous and pernicious."¶ Such, and such as these, in frightful variety, are the doctrines of Calvin. That they are not holy, I have proved, I think sufficiently, by merely repeating what they are. And, my brethren, in the same manner, if the detail did not exceed the limits of a discourse, I could place before

\* Inst. 1. 1.

† Inst. 1. 1. cap. 18.

‡ De Lib. Arb.

|| Inst. 1. 2.

§ Inst. 1. 3. cap. 2.

¶ In Mat. v.

you the doctrines of the other great co-operators in the work of the reformation,---of Zuinglius, Beza, Carlostadius, Bucer, and a long *et cætera* of well known names, which the zeal of protestantism has emblazoned with distinguished titles, and honoured with imposing epithets. These men, and many more of them, had each their codes of faith, which all differed from the creeds of their first apostles;---and which all, like the creeds of the first apostles, contained tenets, which to your sense of piety, would appear unholy and immoral,---annihilating those principles which you respect, as the sources of sanctification,---deriding, as superstitious, what you deem the encouragements to devotion,---and breaking down those barriers, which you consider as the hinderances of sin.

It is not, I have before remarked,---after considering the fermentation of the period of the reformation, and the nature of the leading principle upon which the reformation rested---not that I wonder, that its doctrines were not holy; neither (these considerations weighed) and I astonished, even at their immorality, their impiety, or their diversity. The leading principle alone of the reformation, which constitutes every individual the judge of the sacred scriptures, and the arbiter of his own belief, accounts, naturally, for all these mischiefs.---Indeed, the mere nature of religious faith accounts, obviously, for them. Faith is a chain very nicely put together. Break only a few links, or sometimes, only a single link, and the whole chain will



fall to pieces. What alone I wonder at, is this:—how any, who had a love for virtue, and a respect for piety, could, even in the effervescence of a revolution, have adopted, as divine, doctrines such as those, which I have repeated. And now, that the effervescence of the reforming mania has passed away, I wonder equally, how any can still revere, as “the envoys of the divinity,” the men who called such doctrines into notice;—I wonder how they can venerate, as the work of God, the establishments which are raised upon them. At all events, it is evident, that the doctrines of the reformation are not holy;—evident, that should any individual adopt them; as the regulators of his conduct, that man would be necessarily *unholy*. Therefore, is this consequence also evident, that if *holiness of doctrine* be a characteristic of the true church,—as it certainly is,—then, are not the establishments of the reformation the true church; since this characteristic they manifestly want.

III. When I discussed, in my preceeding discourse, the catholic claims to holiness, I dwelt, at some length, upon the veneration which our church entertains, for what I then termed the *evangelical counsels*—the virtues of chastity, obedience and poverty, as they are cultivated by a considerable multitude of her children;—and I noticed the *practices* by which she nourishes in *all* her children, the influences of piety, and the spirit of devotion. You, thefore, perhaps, may here expect, that forming, as I am, a comparison, and as-

sisting you to do the same,---I should present to you the *terms*, which, in the reformed churches, correspond to these objects of our religion. No doubt, the expectation is natural; and the order of my subject would compel me to satisfy it, if what I have said already, respecting the doctrines of protestantism, did not render such discussion useless. By the few doctrines, which I have cited, you remarked, that the necessity of all those practices is set aside, which you and I have been instructed to revere; and which the wisdom, we conceive, of Jesus Christ had recommended, as the aids to holiness and perfection. You remarked, that a leading maxim in the doctrines of the reformers, is this,---that "*faith alone suffices to give salvation.*" Now, this maxim alone, if true, supersedes the obligation of pious observances and painful practices. For, why observe, and practice; or, who so unwise, as to observe and practice, what is incommodious to self-love and sensuality, if the mere easy tribute of belief, be sufficient to secure salvation?---Accordingly, if you consult the writings of the reformers, you find, that all those practices, which the piety of preceding ages had established, and which the instincts of piety respect, are not only, not inculcated, but insulted, ridiculed and reviled.\* the evangelical

\* "*There is nothing,*" says Luther, "*that I hate so much as Jerome, with his perpetual cant of abstinence and chastity.*"---But hear, how he ridicules the piety of the saints. "*The holiness of these men consisted*" he adds, "*in severe fasts, long prayers,*

counsels are there treated, as the inventions of popish folly; and their observance, as acts of superstition.---Mortification, fasting, confession, &c. are declared useless, if not pernicious. "*These,*" says Luther, unfurling the standard of liberty---"*these are chains riveted by popish tyranny, on tender consciences. Man is born free. The gospel declares him free. Not angels can take one iota from this law. Do what you please. ONLY BELIEVE, and you are justified,*" It was in language, such as this, that Luther, and a host of his associates, treated all the established practices of piety and mortification; rejecting them as superstitious, and substituting nothing in their room, that is painful to sensuality. What were the effects of this kind of eloquence, it is not here the place to relate;---but, my brethren, you easily conceive it. \*

However, I do allow,---and I allow it with pleasure, for the credit of human reason,---that licentious as were the principles of the reformers, yet, did not the whole body of their followers adopt them. By an act

*sleeping on the ground, covered with hair-cloth and ashes,---holiness, which a dog or a pig might practice every day.*" De serv. Arb.---Could a disciple of Epicurus, or a votary of Bacchus, condemn mortification, more expressively?

\* "*Men,*" says Luther, "*are now come to such a pitch, that they stand no longer in need of teachers. Each one gives the law to himself. Men are become pigs; they live like pigs; and die like pigs. And yet, they wish to be looked upon, as more evangelical than Christ himself.*" In Mat. T. 5.



of fortunate inconsistency, quite incompatible with the notion that Luther and his colleagues were the envoys of the Almighty, although they called them such, a portion of the reformed community,—(it was a very small portion) either rejected many of their principles, or received them with modifications. Indeed, the most slender sense of modern piety shrinks from them with disgust, unless improved by some kind of modification. Guided, therefore, either by the decencies of reason, the remaining partialities of their early education, or by a real respect for virtue,—and obeying the dictates of one or other of these motives, instead of the suggestions of veneration for their supposed apostles, these conscientious, but inconsistent individuals, retained some of the ancient practices and observances of the parent church. They had too much good sense not to see, and too much candor not to own, that what the holy and the wise had always cultivated, must be useful to the conquest of passion, and beneficial to the improvement of virtue. But, after all, what were the practices and observances, that these men retained? Why, my brethren, without entering into the enumeration of them, let it suffice to say;—nothing that was very rigid and severe;—nothing that was very painful and distressing to self-love;—nothing, at which passion and nature wept. They lightened every burden, and mitigated every austerity. So that, if indeed, the path which these more sanctified members of the protestant community pursued, were the path to heaven,—it was,

at least, a path more easy far, and much more commodious, than that which they had followed, while they were the members of the catholic church.

And thus also, I acknowledge, at the present epoch, more even than at the period, to which I have been alluding,—there are many protestants, who retain practices and cultivate observances, that are friendly to virtue, and conducive to devotion. Be the thing as inconsistent as it may, there are a multitude of modern protestants, that reprobate the principles of the first reformers, as much as we do. Well, but what, again, are the practices, even now, which our stricter protestants retain? My brethren, you live in the midst of them; and on this point, you may ask your own experience. Do you know the protestant whose practices of piety are rigid and austere;—who, in the conduct of his life, reflects back the image of those men, whose piety you have admired in the annals of christian virtue?—For example,—to appeal only to one single instance,—it is a fact, that the protestant establishment of this nation has preserved among its practices of piety, the institution of fasts and abstinence. This institution is so evidently useful, and so often recommended in the sacred scriptures, that the English church enforces it, in its Books of Homilies and of Common Prayer;—regulates its observance in its spiritual calendar; and with all the weight, both of its spiritual and political authority, ordains that its subjects shall respect and cultivate it. And yet do you know

the protestant, that does respect and cultivate it? Do you believe, that in its priesthood, or its prelacy, there is an individual who respects and cultivates it;—who fasts, whenever his religion bids him? For my own part,---nor do I think myself illiberal in saying it,---I do not. However, be all this as it may, still it is true, that whatever be the practices, which any of the various sects of protestantism retain and cultivate, they are not, in number, very considerable:---they are not, in their operation, painful to human sensuality;---in their bearings, humiliating to human self-love;---in their influences very animating to human indolence. The best recommendation of some of them is, that they are the remnants of catholicity;---but remnants, weakened in their principle, and lessened in their motive. What, in general, is deemed among protestants to constitute piety, is to *believe*,---I do not say what, for that depends upon the fancy of each individual;---to add to belief, the flight of immorality;---to be punctual in attending the public service of the Sunday;---and, on a few occasions of the year, to take, as they call it, the sacrament. Whoever does this, although in this, there be no great sacrifice of passion, or inclination, or self-love,---is considered, holy. In short, I repeat it, this is true, that in the practices of protestant piety, there is nothing arduous, or severe; nothing penitential, or repulsive; nothing, consequently, which expressive of peculiar sanctity, is also peculiarly calculated to



exalt sanctity.---But, I now proceed to the consideration of *the characters of the members of the reformation.*

IV. If hitherto,---which is the fact,---I have experienced reluctance, in delineating the portraits, and in making the reflections, which I have placed before you;---still greater will be that, which I shall experience in giving the descriptions, and in suggesting the considerations, which belong to the present division of my discourse. It is more odious to draw the portrait of the vices of an individual, than it is to describe his errors;---more painful to make reflections upon men, than upon doctrines. Doctrines and errors have frequently this apology for their belief, that they are the dictate of the weakness of the understanding, unconnected with any depravity of the heart. Vices, at least, where they are deliberate, and still more, where they are habitual, have no excuse for their indulgence. They imply, always, in such cases, a contempt of the law of morals; and often a badness of disposition.---Hence do I feel a reluctance to pourtray the characters of the members of the reformation. I certainly should not do it, if the nature of my subject did not compel me to perform the unpleasing talk.

But, my brethren, before I describe to you the lives of the first reformers, let me premise a few reflections, similar to those which I have promised already at the opening of this discourse. They are these:---that when God proposes, in his mercy and wisdom, to recal his

creatures from the paths of vice and error, and to reconduct them to the pastures of truth and sanctity, it is natural to suppose, that he would select, as his agents, for the execution of so beneficent a design, men whose characters corresponded to the nature of the divine commission. At least, it is absurd to suppose, that he would select as his agents, men whose characters were directly repugnant to its nature. To my ideas of propriety, no solecism appears more palpable, than the notion that God should depute the immoral to enforce morality; the turbulent to establish peace; the proud to plant humility; the impure to inculcate chastity;—the professed advisers with Satan to bring back the truth.\* It is, I think, insulting to the divine wis-

\* Luther owns that he had frequent conferences with Satan; and, it was, he tells us, at the instigation of this enlightened theologian, that he was induced to reject the mystery of transubstantiation. In his work, *On the Abrogation of Private Masses*, he gives an account of one of these conferences, and gives it in a manner so minutely circumstantial, so solemnly serious, that the imagination of the timid sees almost the devil conjured up before it, and stands aghast at the horrid spectre. He describes the hour of the apparition,—it was the awful dead of night:—the figure of Satan,—it was such precisely, as Hogarth would have depicted:—his voice,—it was the roar of the loudest thunder:—his mode of reasoning,—“*he made both the question and the answer be perceived at once:*”—his own fears,—the heart palpitated, and the perspiration was most profuse! All this, and much more than all this, Luther very feelingly describes. The consequence was, that, grateful for whatever could promote the cause of truth, he piously

dom to assert it;—as it is insulting to reason to believe it. The character of the agent should, on such occasions, correspond to the character of his agency. It is so, even in the transactions of human interests. In human interests, it would be deemed a very gross absurdity to commission, as the instrument of an important measure, an individual, the features of whose character were opposed to the features of his office.—Indeed, in the transactions of human interests, such absurdity does not happen. Men are too wise, and too consistent to commit it. They measure always the quality of the agent, by the quality of his functions.—Accordingly, if these maxims be correct, it follows, that if, indeed, on the occasion of the reformation, God did impart a commission to re-instruct and reform

acquiesced in the suggestions of the spectre, and abolished transubstantiation!

In like manner Zuinglius also owns, that he, too, had consultations with the same enlightened monitor; and that it was also from him, that he learnt the very important dogma, that the Eucharist is but a figure! See his work *De Subsidiis*. Euch. Tom. 2.

Are not the above acknowledgments of Luther and Zuinglius alone sufficient to convince common sense, that these men were not the envoys of God? And are not the concessions, that it was from Satan, that they received their doctrines respecting the Eucharist, equally and alone enough to prove that their doctrines, on these points, are not divine? Thus, we see the two leading apostles of protestantism, acknowledge themselves the disciples of the devil! And thus the two leading tenets of the two leading societies of protestantism, are declared also to have been learnt from the devil!



his creatures, he would have imparted it to men, whose characters were,—not disqualifications for its performance,—not discommendations of its propriety,—but to men, whose characters were consonant to the duties of their sacred office, and whose conduct was the model of the virtues which they were sent to plant.

The above maxims are the dictate of common sense. And, if, appealing to the test of experience, and to the various occasions on which it has pleased the divine mercy to depute extraordinary commissions to mankind, you consult, whether these were the maxims which God has sanctioned, you find, that such, on every occasion, was the fact. You find, that on every occasion, previous to the era of the pretended reformation, whenever God deputed his agents to convey his graces to mankind, he invested them with qualities, that were consonant to the nature of their mission. They were always men, eminent for their piety, their purity and their austerity. They were, in general, recommended by the gift of miracles, in order that the public might be more forcibly induced to give them credit. Never among them do you discover, that there is question of passions, and wives, and women, and licentiousness. Even among those, who, without having been the extraordinary agents of the divine mercy, have still been the great advocates of truth and piety,—the Austins, the Cyprians, the Chrysostoms,—even among these, there never was question of these sensual things. The

great advocates of truth and piety, and still more, the extraordinary agents commissioned by the Almighty to re-establish truth and piety, were always holy;—their morals always pure; their lives always saintly,—shedding around them the odour of goodness, and attesting by their actions, if not the reality, at least the probability, of their delegation. My brethren, be careful to bear these general and obvious maxims in your recollection, whilst I apply them, as I shall now do, to the characters of the reformers. Only, let me admonish you to be, while careful to remember these maxims, careful also to append to them this other important principle,—that “*the spirit of God is unchangeable.*” By the preceding maxims, you know, what should be, and what have been always, the characters of those, whom God has certainly deputed.—By this latter principle, you will consequently ascertain, that if the reformers did not resemble these, then they were not his agents.—*The spirit of God is unchangeable.*

You must feel, that by a few strokes of the pencil, it is impossible to delineate all the features of all the reformers; or to mark half the striking attitudes in which they stood. There is enough in the features and attitudes of each of these men, to form a very interesting portrait; and to fill a canvass of the largest size. Mine, to-day, must be the trifling etching of a few features only; and of only two or three of the most distinguished characters. And, lest it should

appear the work of prejudice, it shall be, not the production of my own pencil, but the fruit of protestant industry.

The first portrait, which, of course, you will expect me to present, should be that of *Luther*, the great apostle of the reformation;—the man who declared himself “*an apostle divinely commissioned by Jesus Christ;*” and whom every protestant,—to be a consistent protestant, should revere as such. We have, fortunately, the portrait, or rather portraits, of *Luther* drawn by himself;—his portrait, while he was yet a catholic and a monk;—and his portrait, after he had commenced the career of his reformation; when he was a protestant and an apostle. I present both the portraits, for reasons which are too obvious to stand in need of explanation. Behold the portrait of the catholic and the monk. “*When I lived,*” he says, “*in my monastery, I punished my body with watching, and fasting, and prayer. I observed my vows of chastity, of poverty, and obedience. Whatsoever I did, I did with singleness of heart; with good zeal; and for the glory of God; I feared grievously the last day; and was desirous to be saved, from the bottom of my heart.*”<sup>\*</sup> The portrait is pleasing, it gives a favourable idea of the man; of his religion; and of the state of conventual institutions.—Behold, now, the portrait of the protestant and the reformer. “*I am burnt,*” he says, “*with the flames of my untamed flesh. I am*

<sup>\*</sup>Ad. Gal.



*mad, almost with the rage of lust, and the desire of women. I, who ought to be fervent in spirit, am fervent in impurity, in sloth, &c.\* Relying on the strong foundation of my learning, I yield not in pride, either to emperor, king, prince, or devil; no, not to the universe itself.”†* My brethren, although these are but a few features of the portrait, yet surely, they suffice to display the character of the man. And, alas! what features are they in the character of an apostle!‡

It may, perhaps, appear superfluous, after presenting to the above portrait of Luther, to present to you, also, the descriptions of his character, from the pencil of any other individual. The above portrait is original; and sufficient for all the purposes, which induced me to exhibit it. However, since the subject is curious, as well as important, let me, in few words, shew you, what likewise, was the opinion, which many of the advocates of the reformation entertained of their great apostle. — “*Luther,*” says Hospinian, “*is a man absolutely furious; accustomed to combat the truth, not only unjustly, but in contradiction to the suggestions of his own conscience.*” “*He is,*” Æcolampadius asserts, “*puffed up with arrogance and pride; and seduced by satan.*” “*Indeed,*” adds Zuinglius, “*so great is the power, which Satan possesses*

\*In. Col. Mens.

†Resp. ad. Maled. Reg. Aug.

‡Sleydan, the beloved disciple of Luther, says of him:—that “*he was so sensible of his own immorality, that he wished to be removed from the office of preaching.*” Lib. 2. An. 1520.

over Luther, that he seems to aim at the possession of the whole man.”\* Even the friends of the reformer, with all their partiality to him, canonizing him as “a second Paul,” or praising him as “another Baptist,”—even they do not exhibit him in the features, which accord with the character of an apostle. They, lamenting the unfortunate circumstances, allow that he was violent in the maintenance of his authority; arrogant in the defence of his opinions, and scurrilous in the refutation of his enemies. They allow that he was vain, arbitrary, ambitious, &c. It would be tedious to cite the writings of these admirers of Luther. But, I will just cite what Luther’s dearest friend says of him. Melancthon, you all know it, was this friend,—the confidant of all his designs, and the daily witness of his actions. And, hear what he says. *“I tremble when I consider the passions of Luther,—passions, as violent as the outrages of Hercules, of Philoctetes, and of Marius.”* My brethren, need I ask you, if to your ideas of consistency and decorum, such appear the fit character of “an agent and envoy of the Almighty?” Does not your piety weep at the infatuation, which can believe in it?†

\*Resp. ad. con. Lut.

†After an interval of nearly three centuries, when passion and prejudice, and partiality, should have relented into wisdom, and when objects might be seen in their just proportions,—it ought to appear singular that any should still be so absurd as to panegyrisé Luther, and in the man who confesses himself the dupe of pas-

The character of Calvin, as it is described by his cotemporaries and coadjutors, is, in point of violence, of vanity and lust, not less scandalous than that of Luther. He is called by the reformer Bucer, “a  
 sion, still obstinately to view the saint. The circumstance is certainly unwise:—and yet, is such still the case with almost every modern protestant. I could produce a multitude of instances of it; but I will content myself with one from the eloquent discourses of Dr. Rennel. In the doctor’s discourses, there is a portrait of Luther, drawn, it is true, by the hand of a great painter;—although not a feature in the picture resemble the original. In it not only the virtues of the man are canonized; but even his passions and vices are beautified, and emblazoned into perfections. *“His virtues were great: his life holy and severe.”* (Dr. R.) And Luther tells us of himself, that he was *“the victim of lust and sloth; he even owns that his lust was so violent, as to take away his reason.”* (In Col. Mens.) Now, if such a man be holy, where is libertine that is not holy? *“The assurance of his mind was not to be shook or surprised.”* (Dr. R.) Why so? Melancthon assures us that *“the violence of his mind was great, as that of Hercules, or of Marius.”*—*“He had no ambition, but in the service of God.”* (Dr. R.) And yet himself acknowledges, that his *“pride was equal to that of Satan.”* In this manner, does, the painter proceed in giving each feature of the apostle. And then, as if to illumine the whole, and to cast a beam of glory round the head of the holy man,—he exclaims,—*“how beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him, who brings glad tidings!”*—How profane the application! It is true, since every portrait requires shades, he does admit that Luther had a few trifling imperfections. *“If, indeed,”* he modestly and reluctantly says, *“among the crowd of his virtues a FAILING crept in; an apostle was not irreproachable:—if, in the body of his doctrines a FLAW is to be seen, the*



*mere dog,—a malevolent man, judging of men by the measure of his love and hatred for them.*” Volmar says of him, “*he is violent and perverse; but,*”—he adds,—“*so much the better, since violence is necessary to promote our cause.*” The writings of Calvin are striking monuments, as those of Luther, of the most

*greatest lights, in the purest times, were not without them.*”—Surely, the man who thus describes the great reformer, must have been ignorant of his real character! This is the best apology for such description. Else, must it be admitted, that the grossest vices are but *failings*, and the most detestable errors, only *flaws*. Or, if the *failings* of Luther were not vices; and his flaws not detestable errors, then, let Dr. R. explain, what vices and errors are? And, again, how profane and insulting is the comparison of Luther’s vices, to the pious warmth of an apostle; and of his impious doctrines to the opinions of the holy fathers!

From this example, or from examples like this, let the protestant learn what, even upon great minds, is the force of prejudice and partiality: and let him trace, by what disingenuous acts his reason is seduced to revere, what if not seduced, it would abhor. I respect the talents and learning of Dr. R. The doctor, on subjects not connected with religion, is, perhaps, a great man. He views some objects from the eminence of reason, and with the eye of wisdom. But it is not so when he views the objects, either of protestantism or catholicity. In viewing the former he places himself on the little mole-hill of his partiality; and with the eyes of a mole,—if it have eyes,—he sees nothing that is wrong. In viewing the latter, he places himself on the huge mountain of his prejudices; and with eyes sharper than those of the lynx, sees nothing that is right. However, peace to the doctor. I allow that in these respects he is not singular. The wisest protestants are often absurdly unwise, in whatever relates to catholicity.

preposterous vanity. In them, he often, like Luther, boasts that himself alone had shed the beams of truth upon the world.\* As for his lusts, they are attested by various protestant writers. "*Horrible things,*" says the learned Schusselburge, "*are objected to Calvin, in public writings, concerning his lasciviousness; his sundry abominable vices, and his sodomitical lusts. And it was,*" he adds, "*in punishment of these, and of his profane doctrines, that the rod of the divine justice fell so heavily upon him at his death;—for he died in despair, blaspheming God.*"†

Zuinglius is another of the chief authors of the reformation, ranked in Jewell's *Apology for the Church of England*, with the great apostle Luther; and with him, honoured with the title of "*a most excellent man, sent by God to give light to the whole world.*" It is true, that it is the fate of Zuinglius, as it is of every other reformer, to be extravagantly praised by one class of men,---the creatures of the same faction,---and to be equally dispraised by another. Thus, the man, whom Jewell and a multitude of protestants revere, is, by Luther and the Luthe-

\* "*I can say without vanity,*" says Calvin, "*that I have thrown more light upon the Scriptures, than all the doctors of the church put together.*" Antid. Trid.

† "*All that I teach,*" says Luther, "*is the truth. All have been blind but myself. For, I know that I have the spirit of Christ, by which I can judge of all, and none judge of me.*"—Collat. Lib. 7.

‡ In Theol. Calv. Lib. 2.

rans, branded with every opprobrious epithet, that hostility can suggest. Luther calls him "*a son of hell; an associate with Arius; a man undeserving to be prayed for.*" However, we will not judge of this apostle, either from the insults of his enemies, or from the flattery of his friends. I will present to you only a single feature of his character, as it is delineated by himself; and from it alone, you may judge with accuracy, of his vocation to the holy functions of an apostle. It would seem, that Zuinglius had inherited from constitution, passions of the most violent description. Not that this circumstance is, at all, criminal or material in itself, or repugnant to the character of an apostle. It is from the effects only of the passions, that we can decide the unfitness, or the fitness of an individual for that sacred office.—Behold, then, what Zuinglius says of his own passions and of their effects. "*Hitherto I have found, that the gift of chastity is denied me: and I have burnt, Oh shame! so greatly, that I have committed many things indecently.*"\* In his letter to the bishop of Constance, he makes the same candid, though scandalous, acknowledgement, not only of his own lusts, but of that of his apostolic colleagues. "*The deeds of the flesh,*" he says, "*have rendered us infamous in the sight of the churches.*" I say nothing of the civil war, which the violence of Zuinglius provoked in Swisserland;—nothing of his death, which he met in the field of battle;—nothing of his intercourse with the devil, with whom, he tells us, he fre-

\*Ep. ad. Remp. Helvet.



quently conferred;—nothing of his doctrines, which are impious, as any that I have mentioned in this discourse. What I have said, is enough to prove, that Zuinglius was not that “*excellent man*,” described in the *Apology for the Church of England*,—“*sent to give light to the whole world*.”

But, (for it would far exceed the limits of a discourse to describe the characters of these men,) such, and such as these, were the authors of the protestant reformation;—such the fountains, from which flow all the streams that irrigate its pastures;—such the individuals, whom the protestant, to be consistent, is bound to consider the favourites of heaven; the organs of truth; the instruments of grace. I will only say, that, if indeed, they were such, they were certainly a very different class of men, from what piety would expect, —and very different from all those, whom on every other occasion of the dispensation of his mercies, God has deputed as his agents. In their portraits, when placed by the side of the portraits of the first apostles of Jesus Christ, you seek in vain for a single trait,—for one line of similitude,—between them.\* The man who seriously believes them apostles, possesses a singular degree of credulity;—he believes what is re-

\* The most moral, and certainly the most moderate among the apostles of the reformation, was Melancthon. Yet, was not Melancthon a fit character for an apostle. He was weak, wavering, and unsteady. After the death of Luther, he cultivated the friendship of Calvin and Bullinger. He even appears to have adopted

pugnant to every principle of rational probability, and contradictory to every rule of precedent;—he believes what, I have said, appears to me so absurd,—that, then, God selected and employed the corrupted, as his favourite agents;—commissioned the violent to establish peace; the proud, to preach humility; the impure, to plant chastity;—the ——

It is a fact, that very few protestants know the history of the formation of protestanism; or are at all acquainted with the lives of the men, who raised the various fabrics of that great establishment. Protestants are, nearly all of them, protestants, from the accident of birth, much more than from the dictate of knowledge, or from the operation of principle. And these,—if there be such in this assembly,—will, very naturally, be surprised at the delineation, which I have made of the characters of their apostles. Perhaps, indeed, diffident of its accuracy, they may have said within themselves—“Surely, it cannot be correct:—with characters, such as those just described, men could not have deceived the public;—could not have established the reformation;—could not, above all, have obtained that degree of respect,—that veneration even,

the sentiments of the latter, whom, before, he had zealously combated. Many Lutherans accuse him of Arianism. Illyricus, Armsdorff, &c. call him ‘*a shoe for every foot; a corrupter of the word of God, a Palagian.*’ Stancarus names him “*The northern Anti-christ;*” while others accuse him of Manichæism.

—which its authors secured among their followers. It appears absurd and ridiculous to suppose it.” My brethren, these observations, which I dare say have passed in the minds of my protestant hearers, are certainly natural enough, if either they have not studied the history of the reformation; or are not versed in the history of the philosophy of the human mind. To men who are skilled in either, they would not occur. The historian and the philosopher know well, how easy a thing it is to deceive the public; and how easy, when once they are deceived, it is to erect upon their credulity, an edifice of veneration and respect, which all the influences of truth, in vain labour to overturn. The annals of almost every age and every nation, are full of attestations of these facts. In reality, if you only suppose and admit the opportunity of disseminating false principles *with impunity*; be these heretical or revolutionary,---you may account, at once, for the establishment, in the former case, of a false religion; and, in the latter, of civil factions. When men of great talents and great ambition, are permitted under such shelter, to combat and revile received opinions, and to substitute new opinions in their room:---when they are allowed to insult their superiors, and to flatter the passions of the vulgar:---when they are suffered to create diffidence and perplexity in the public mind,---there is no mischievous effect, which, under the operation of such mischievous circumstances, they may not, very easily, produce. It is difficult, if you



please, to enlighten the vulgar, but very easy to deceive them:—difficult to allay their passions; but easy to excite them. The vulgar love to be deceived; because their inclinations lean always to the same side with their passions.

By these maxims, you may explain, how men of bad characters,—such as the reformers,—were enabled to seduce the public; and even to establish in their minds an empire of veneration and respect. Under the shelter of the extreme moderation of the church, at the dawn of the reformation; and with the connivance, at least, of the civil power, Luther, in the first instance, and after Luther many others, were allowed to vilify the doctrines and practices of the church; to insult its pastors; and to propose new tenets, flattering to the liberty, and congenial to the passions of the human heart. The plans of these men were laid, with all the wisdom of ambition; and they were conducted, with a measure of industry and artifice, that was calculated to make them popular. Their motives, they pretended, were the love of truth, and zeal for the public happiness;—their language, adapted to such motives, was bold, animated, and ardent:—their whole conduct was new and extraordinary. The consequence is obvious:—the vulgar, the ignorant, the restless, and a multitude of the simple and unsuspecting, listened to them, and admired. Some believed; many doubted, and were perplexed. In a state of doubt and perplexity alone, it requires but a very moderate

share of dexterity, for any individual to become a leader. In such state, the multitude, unable to guide themselves, and therefore unwilling to guide themselves, seek always for a leader: and under the strong impression of its necessity, they often prostitute their confidence to any enthusiast, who has the eloquence to deceive, or the boldness to command them. What wonder, therefore, that under circumstances such as those which I have described, and at a period of fermentation too, men like Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c.—men possessed of talents, and learning, and cunning, and ambition, and powerful lungs,—men clothed in the mantle of piety, and armed with the sacred scriptures, which they tortured to every sense, that their interests prompted,—what wonder, that they should easily have become leaders, and have imposed on ignorance? At the period of the reformation, such was from the causes which I have mentioned, the state of the public mind, that the variest monsters, such as Muncer and John of Leyden;—the most stupid fanatics, such as Suendfelt and Hutchinson, not only drew after them immense hordes of followers,—not only induced them to believe the most senseless falsehoods, but imprinted on their minds the most awful veneration, for their persons, a veneration great at least as their real sanctity could have inspired. Indeed, my brethren, do you not remark it every day, within the little circle in which you move, with what extreme facility, fanaticism,—the fanaticism, for example, of the Methodist,—imposes upon

the credulity of the protestant; just, as once the fanaticism of the protestant deluded the simplicity of the catholic? But, in short, if there be any truths on the rolls of history, that are incontestible, they are these;—that it is easy to deceive the public;—easy, by the aid of insult and misrepresentation, to acquire an influence over their passions;—and easy, when once this influence is acquired, to give it a dominion;—to force the men, who are the dupes of its illusions, to bend their necks to the yoke of nonsense; and to reverence the individual, who has compelled them to stoop to the act of degradation. The public, when duped by the fanaticism of an enthusiast, or the hypocrisy of an apostate, are a flock that he may drive wherever his fancy pleases,—at least, he may do it; till either a bolder enthusiast, or a more artful dogmatist, rise up to supplant his industry;—or till some accident befall that dissolves the charm of folly. By these maxims, you may understand, how, with characters such as those which I have given to the first reformers, they succeeded in misleading the public, and in securing to themselves a degree of veneration, which, most certainly, they did not merit.

V. But, let us now consider the consequences of reformation;—or, as I have named them, *the fruits*, which resulted from the establishment of that revolution. This is what constitutes the last division of this discourse.

It is one of our general maxims,—I have before remark-



ed,---to judge of the nature of an institution, from the nature of its fruits. The maxim is the dictate of reason; and it is sanctioned by the test of experience. Our great redeemer refers us to it, in order to ascertain with wisdom the evidence of truth, and the secure medium of salvation. "*From their fruits,*" he says, alluding to men who are, or who pretended to be, the delegates of heaven,---*from their fruits you shall know them. The good tree does not produce bad fruit.*" Consequently, if indeed the reformation be the work of God, and the re-establishment of the true religion,---and this is what the protestant asserts,---then, it is plain, that the evidence of these blessings should be manifest, in the evidence of their fruits.

And, what were the fruits of the reformation, Were they analogous to the professions of its supposed apostles, and consonant to the nature of an institution, which was to give back to christianity, it was contended, its original truth and purity? Alas! my brethren, I will tell you, to what they were analogous? ---not certainly, to the professions of its apostles:---not to the nature of an institution, that was to recal the spirit of primitive sanctity. They were analogous to the *methods*, by which the revolution of the reformation was conducted:---they were analogous to the *doctrines*, which it taught:---they were analogous to the *characters of the men*, whose industry gave it birth. The methods, I have shewn you, by which the propagation of the reformation was conducted, were vio-

lence, insult and injustice. And the fruits of such reformation correspond to such methods of propagation:---they were the contempt of authority, and the wantonness of liberty. The doctrines of the reformation, I have demonstrated to you, were unholy and profane, including the rejection of all those austere provisions, which stay the power of passion. And the fruits of such doctrines were suited to their bearings:---they were, the rejection of good works, and the abandonment of penance, fasts, mortification and continence. The characters of the reformers, I have made it clear from their own concessions, were immoral and corrupted. And the fruits that grew among their followers, answered well to the influences of such characters:---they were, vice, in almost every feature of deformity.

But, lest these assertions, respecting the fruits of the reformation, should appear exaggerated, or the dictate of my own prejudices, I will repeat to you what the reformers themselves,---men the most interested to defend the reformation,---have reluctantly, admitted on this subject. "*We see,*" says Luther, "*that through the malice of the devil, men are now more avaricious, more cruel, more disorderly, more insolent, and much more wicked, than they were under popery.*"\* "*If any one wish,*" says Musculus, *to see a multitude of knaves, disturbers of the public peace, &c.---let him go to a city, where the gospel is preached in its purity;*" (he means a reformed city) "*for it is clearer than the*

\* In Postil. Dom. part. 1. Dom. 2. Adv.

*light of day, that there never were pagans more vicious and disorderly, than these professors of the gospel.”\** “*The thing,*” says Melancthon, “*speaks for itself:—in this country, among the reformed, their whole time is devoted to intemperance and drunkenness (inmanibus poculis.) So deeply are the people sunk into barbarity and ignorance, that many of them would imagine they should die in the night, if they should chance to fast in the day.*”† Neither was this growth of vice and ignorance confined to Germany. They grew, wherever the seeds of the reformation were permitted to take root. “*In this nation,*” says Stubbs, after he had made the tour of the island,---“*I found a general decay of good works; or rather, a plain defection and falling away from God.*”‡ But hear, how the eloquent Erasmus describes the fruits of the reformation. He was, indeed, a catholic; but a catholic whom the protestants allow to have been impartial. He was an eye witness to the introduction and progress of the reformation observed its workings with the eye of a philosopher, and has marked them down with the accuracy of a candid and correct historian. “*And who,*” he says, “*are these gospel people? Look around you and shew me one, who has become a better man. Shew me one, who once a glutton, is now turned sober; ---one, who before violent, is now meek;---one, who before avaricious,*

\* Dom. 1. Adv.

† Ad. Cap. vi. Mat.

‡ Motives to good works. An. 1596.



is now generous;—one, who before impure, is now chaste.—I can point out multitudes, who are become far worse, than they were before. . . . In their assemblies you never see any of them heave a sigh; shed a tear, or strike his breast, even on the days that are sacred to affliction. . . . Their discourses are little else, but calumnies against the preisthood. They have abolished confession; and few of them confess their sins, even to God. They have abrogated fasting; and they wallow in sensuality. They have become Epicureans, for fear of being Jews. They have cast off the yoke of human institutions; and along with it, they have shaken off the yoke of the Lord. So far from being submissive to bishops, they are disobedient to the civil magistrates. What tumults and seditions mark their conduct! For what trifles do they fly to arms! Saint Paul commanded the first christians to shun the society of the wicked:—and behold! the reformers seek most, the society of the most corrupted. These are their delight. . . . The gospel now flourishes, forsooth! because priests and monks take wives, in opposition to human laws, and in despite of their sacred vows. Own it is folly to exchange evils for evils; and madness to exchange small evils for great ones.”\* I have omitted, whilst citing these passages from Erasmus, many other passages equally eloquent with the above, and equally as they are, descriptive of the effects of the new reform.

\*Ep. 47. Lib. 31.

What I have cited is enough to convince you that these effects were not such, as to impress you with a very exalted notion of its divinity;—enough to convince you, that, if indeed, the maxim of our Redeemer, which I placed at the head of these reflections, be true,—that “*the tree is known by its fruits; and that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit,*” then is the reformation, which produced little else but immorality,—the creature of passion and the offspring of disorder. “*Indeed,*” says Melancthon, weeping while he says it—*speaking modestly; any other state of things, in any other age, exhibits the beauties of an age of gold, when it is compared to the confusoin; which the reformers have introduced.*”<sup>\*</sup> Such my brethren, was the morning of that day, which, it was contended, should beam with equal brightness upon the world as that which illumined it, when “*the Orient, from on high, came down to visit us.*”

It is not in the power of protestant partiality to call in question the authenticity of the testimonies, which I have just alledged; nor from the characters of their authors, to contest their accuracy. If there be any testimonies that the protestant must deem unexceptionable, they are such as those, which I have quoted. Neither, would it be wise in the protestant, in order to apologise for the disorders which I have mentioned, to say,—“that they were only the accidental evils of a moment,

<sup>\*</sup>Ep. Lib. 4.

—the evils of a period of change and fermentation.” This is, in reality, the worst of bad apologies for such mischiefs. It is comparing, and assimilating the reformation to a disorderly revolution:—it is deriding the divine wisdom, under whose auspices, it is pretended to have been conducted; and it is vilifying that period, which above every other, should have been distinguished by the attestations of superior sanctity. What! the first fruits of a reformation, disorder!—the first fruits of a system of piety, licentiousness!—the first fruits of the re-establishment of the law of truth, impiety! Surely, such an apology,---and yet, it is often made,---is absurdly weak! Yes, my brethren, and not only is it weak, but—it would be equally easy to shew it,---it is groundless, also. The disorders which I have noticed, as the first fruits of the reformation, were not its first fruits only;—not the transient effects of a change of principle in the mode of belief. They were fruits; which at periods long subsequent to the introduction of this change, the tree of the reformation continued to produce. This will not, I am sure, be denied, by whoever is conversant in the history of protestantism. It stands recorded in the annals of every nation, where this new religion had the power of forming an establishment. In our own annals, there are multiplied attestations of it. “*Miserable*,” says Neal, speaking of the time of Elizabeth, and when the fermentations of the revolutionary violence of the reformation had subsided,---“*miserable and heathenish*



*was the condition of the country, in regard to religion."* That you may form some notion of this condition, hear in what manner the inhabitants of London, in a petition presented to the parliament, during this reign, express themselves. "*In one half of our churches,"* they say, "*we have watchmen that have no eyes; and clouds, that have no water: and in the other half, there is scarcely one-tenth man, that takes conscience to wait on his charge. Whereby, the Lord's Day is often totally neglected; ignorance increaseth; and wicked cometh upon us, like an armed man.*"\*

It will not appear necessary, after the above descriptions of the fruits of protestantism, that I should shew you also, what are its fruits at the present epoch. You all of you feel, that, if its fruits were not divine, at a period when the evidence of their divinity was most natural, and most essential too, in order to attest the divinity of the new reform,—they are not divine, at present. If its first fruits were not divine, the latter fruits are not:—or in other words, if the foundations of the reformation are not divine, so neither is its superstructure. However, let us a moment cast a glance at the present fruits of protestantism. What is the present state of the protestant church;—its situation, in respect to faith;—its condition,

\*"*In the county of Cornwall,"* Neal says, "*there were, at this period, a hundred and forty clergymen, not one of whom could preach a sermon.*" The situation of other counties was nearly similar. Judge of the consequences.

in regard of morals? In respect to faith, we have the attestation of Mosheim,---and better than the attestation of Mosheim,---the testimony of evidence,---that all the establishments of protestantism have departed widely from their original institutions, having, some of them, hardly a feature of their early youth. We have the testimony of evidence, likewise, that protestantism now, as it was in the time of Luther,---indeed, much more now, than it was then,---is a many hundred-headed monster, consisting of a countless multitude of religions;---the insult, many of them, to divine revelation;---the disgrace, some of them, to human reason. The advocates of protestantism have themselves enumerated upwards of three hundred of these religions, regularly organized, and reduced to system; and possessing, each of them, worshippers and admirers. The school of Socinianism is another fruit of protestantism. In fact, Socinianism is the most rational system of protestantism,---the philosophy of protestantism; and the necessary result of the leading principle of protestantism;---the only protestant religion, in which, following his own maxims, the protestant has aught like solid ground to stand on. Every other religion of protestantism is a mid-way region in the air.\* Hence, is Socinianism the religion,

\*"Il est certain," says Diderot, "que les plus sages, les plus savans, et les plus éclairés, d'entres les protestans, se sont, depuis quelque tems, considerablement rapprochés, des dogmes des Antitrinitaires. Ajoutez a cela, le tolerantisme, et vous aurez la cause

not indeed of the great body of the protestant community, because these do not reason,—but, of the chief part of its learned members, who do reason, and who revering the principles of protestantism, have the consistency to apply them. I will say nothing of the impiety, which, in this age is so common in the walks of life. But this, too, if its generation and genealogy be traced, will be found to proceed from the same source; as Socinianism. Such are the fruits of protestantism, relation to the article of belief, at the present period:—fruits extremely natural, and the necessary consequences of protestant principles. For, where each individual is the judge of the sacred scriptures, (and this is the first principle of protestantism,) error and confusion must be the result; and, where each individual is the judge also, and the arbiter of his own faith, (and this is another leading principle of protestantism,) impiety and incredulity must be the result. This is the dictate both of reason and experience.

But what, in the protestant community is, at the present period, the state of its public *morals*?

des progrès rapides que le Socinianisme a fait, des nos jours; des racines profondes, qu'il a jeté, dans la plus part des esprits,—racines, dont les ramifications se developpant, et s'étendant, continuellement, ne peuvent pas manquer, de faire, bientôt, du protestantisme; en general, un Socinianisme parfait, qui absorbera, peu à peu tous les differens systemes de ces errans; et qui sera un centre commun de correspondance, outoutes leurs hypotheses, jusqu' alors, isolées et incoherantes viendront se reunir, et se perdre.”—*Encyc. Art. Unit.*



To whoever is acquainted with the present situation of society, I hardly need to say, that the state of protestant morals is not very flattering to protestant partiality. Vice is a very luxuriant weed in the paths of protestanism: and that corruption, alas, which is too natural to us all, is a very common portion of its members. However, it is not, in this general point of view, that I will now consider the state of protestant morals. Vice and corruption thus considered, are the effects chiefly of passion and licentiousness, unconnected with any peculiar principles of religion. What is the state, let us here enquire, of protestant morals, as they result from protestant maxims? Why, if we merely reflect on the circumstance which I have alluded to, that protestantism comprises above three hundred systems of religion, some of which are profane, some foolish and absurd,—this circumstance alone, to whoever has studied the unity and the purity of the eternal code of morals, is proof, that under the shelter and the sanction of such systems, there must prevail very great aberrations from the laws of piety, and very gross violations of the rules of virtue. That such is the fact, is a truth well known to all those, who are learned in the dark history of these sects. As their principles are erroneous, their practices are vitiated. These, therefore, are properly the fruits of protestantism. Add, in the next place, to the calculation of the bearings of the above facts, the

bearings of this other almost equally momentous fact, that this once fundamental article of the reformation,—that “*faith alone suffices to give salvation*,” is still a maxim of protestant piety and a rule of protestant conduct. I have already instructed you, what are the natural consequences of this principle. It is plain, that not all the ingenuity of self-love could invent a system more convenient to the sensualities of passion. It opens a field to every species of bad indulgence—But, is this principle still common in the protestant communities? Alas, it is too convenient to be uncommon. Yes, it is common, wherever protestantism has an establishment. It is common in this country :—and, sorry I am to remark it,—the multitude of its admirers is increasing. It is a leading maxim of methodism. This, therefore, again is properly the fruit of protestantism.

I do not know, whether in the protestant churches, there be still any so consistent, yet so profane, as to follow in the practice of their lives, *all* the dreadful doctrines of their first apostles—of Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, &c. If there be such, not only are they *not holy*, they are essentially unholy. But, if there be such, their unholiness too, is properly the fruit of protestantism. Be this, however, as it may, certain at least it is, that even in this enlightened age, there exists in the protestant community, under the sanction of protestant principles, a measure of immortality, that is extremely repugnant to christian piety, and extremely disgraceful to a christian institute.

What! you will say, do I then contend, that there are none in the protestant community, who by the purity of their morals, and the piety of their lives, do credit to their institute; and counterbalance, in some degree, the multitude of the profane? My brethren, I have said it before, and I repeat it with satisfaction:---certainly, there are in the protestant community, men of the purest morals, and of distinguished piety;---men who do credit to their institute; and reflect honour upon human nature;---men humane, benevolent, meek, chaste, patient, humble; good fathers, good friends, good citizens, good subjects. Certainly, in the protestant community, there are men of virtuous lives. We each of us, perhaps, know such, within the little circle in which we move. But, here occurs the question, is the purity of the morals of these men the fruit of the protestant religion? My brethren, if you were seriously to discuss and analyze the principle of their piety, you would find, with hardly an exception, that protestantism,---the peculiar tenets of protestantism,---have no connection with it: you would find, that, almost universally, their piety, and the purity of their morals, are the fruits of a happy disposition, and of a fortunate education;---the effects of a reverence for the divinity, and of a desire of future happiness:---the offspring of honour, and of a sense of decency and decorum. Or, if, indeed, those be the real principles of protestantism, which the apostles of protestantism taught, then are



the piety and the purity of the morals of these individuals, the fruits of the violation of protestant principles, and the effects of a fortunate inconsistency. But the truth is, that mere protestantism has nothing to do with their virtue. The protestant who is virtuous, is virtuous, not by protestant, but by catholic principles.

However, having thus admitted and praised the piety of a certain portion of the protestant community, let me add also,—although I have described it before, what the nature of protestant piety is. It is not that rigid, austere, self-denying, and restraining thing, which you trace always in the conduct of the saints; not even that restraining thing, which our religion prescribes to us. Whatever was either painful in the conduct of the saints, or is still arduous in the exercises of catholic discipline, these, the protestant ranks among the superfluities of devotion, or the mummeries of superstition. Look, even, at the most edifying conduct of the most edifying members of the established clergy.—the men, who should be the models of their flocks, and who are professedly the disciples of a mortified master;—you find nothing in their piety, or in their practices, at which softness itself could, without the violation of modesty, complain;—no painful self-denials, that enfeeble the constitution;—no lengthened vigils by the couch of sickness, that endanger life;—no midnight matins, that break their slumbers;—no heroic observance of those heroic counsels,

that Christ Jesus recommended to his followers ;---no. The piety of these men, although honourable, although striking, when it is placed by the side of the excesses and dissipations of the corrupted, is still easy and commodious. If that be the road to heaven, in which they proceed through this life, and in which they gently lead their congregations by the hand, it must be owned, my brethren, that *it is pleasant!* There is hardly a thorn in its paths, or a briar on its margins. And, what, therefore, is the consequence which I deduce? This:---that, if virtue and piety imply and require something arduous and severe,---the sacrifice of inclination and the cultivation of penance ;---if the notions which the saints entertained of sanctity, were correct, (and who will presume to contest them?) then, since in the virtue and piety of protestantism, there is nothing arduous and severe ;---since they are very different from the virtue and piety of the saints; since also, be what they may, they are not, properly, the fruits of any principle, that is merely the growth of protestantism,---therefore, they are not attestations which wisdom could triumphantly produce; as the proofs of the divinity of the reformed religions.

But I will now conclude, although I shall pass over the consideration of several claims, which are generally employed to establish the existence of superior sanctity,---miracles,---the conversion of pagan nations,---the long roll of saints and martyrs, &c. Miracles, the protestant does not boast:---he shews

us no pagan nations, which he has led forth from the shades of infidelity:—nor, fanaticism apart,—does he display a long list of men, whom good sense could confidently rever, as the real saints and martyrs of religion. But, without considering these objects, I have said enough, in the series of my two too-long discourses, to enable you to form an accurate comparison, between the respective claims of the catholic and reformed establishments, to the attribute of *holiness*,—and from the comparison, to deduce an equally accurate conclusion. My brethren, if the premises and principles which I have laid down as the rule of the comparison, be correct;—and they are those which reason suggests, and which the wisdom of the wisest protestants has admitted;—if these be correct, and the delineation also, which I have made of catholicity and protestantism, be faithful;—and this has the strongest evidence for its voucher,---then, is the deduction of the conclusion easy. The true church is essentially *holy*;—holy in its establishment,---holy in its doctrines; holy in its practices;—and holy in its members. The catholic church possesses all these various features of holiness:—the protestant church does not possess them: therefore, is the former the true church,---the latter the work of passion.

My beloved friends, what confidence is ours! What calm delight must we experience, when viewing our situation, we see that our security reposes upon the bases of wisdom; and our hopes, upon the rock of



truth! What consolation, to feel that we are the children of the same family with the saints; and the heirs of all their privileges! Let us rejoice in our happiness; and thankful for the distinguished favour, let us, in accents of gratitude, exclaim:—“*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all, that is “within me, praise his holy name.”*

But, what fears should haunt the feelings of our dissenting brethren! Withheld from the pastures of truth, by the artifices of passion, or the power of prejudice,—just as formerly their fore-fathers were seduced from them, by the arts of ambition, and the influences of fanaticism,—they wander in the labyrinths of error, with no motive to console their confidence, but the suggestions of their self-love;—no foundation to support their hope, but the illusions of ignorance, or the flattery of a good intention:—adoring as truths, what has manifestly the stamp of falsehood; and respecting, as the apostles of God, men, who were evidently the victims of corruption. Let us weep over their blindness; and entreat the divine mercy to remove it. “*Enlighten, O Lord, them that sit in darkness; and direct their feet into the ways of peace.”*

I know that it is difficult, where men have been nursed to prejudices, and where prejudices have ripened into habits,—it is difficult to discover the beam of truth; and unpleasing, often, to measure back the steps that conduct to its sanctuary. I have, however, this opinion of the good sense of multitudes of our pro-

testant brethren, that, could they be once persuaded to suspect their own insecurity; to interrogate its motives; and to trace the history of its origion;—could they be induced, ardently, to desire to know the truth, and assiduously to seek it,—they would discover, that they rest those hopes and assurances, which should be, of all others, the dearest to them, upon the baseless visions of prejudice, or upon the illusions of partiality. At least, beholding *our* religion established by the arms of peace; *theirs* by the power of violence:—seeing *our* doctrines always uniform, and always holy; *theirs* always changing, and often impious:—viewing *our* discipline severe; and *theirs* relaxed:—contemplating *our* members, the hosts of saints, who crowd the abodes of Sion; *theirs*, even their apostles, the children of licentiousness:—seeing this, they could not help feeling, that at all events, catholicity possesses a very striking claim to their esteem and investigation.

There is a measure of ignorance, I hope, or causes of ignorance, which under certain circumstances, excuse the evil of false security, and do away the sin of ill founded partiality. I greatly hope, that there are such apologies for these misfortunes. Yet, do I fear much, that they are extremely rare. It is difficult to reconcile the rejection of the truth, with the terms of the christian covenant. Christ Jesus may confer his favors, on what conditions his wisdom pleases:—and he has positively made one of these conditions, the belief of his sacred doctrines, and submission to

his holy church. "*He that will not believe,*" he says, (the translation of the text is taken from the protestant version) "*shall be damned.*" "*He that will not hear the church, shall be as a heathen and a publican.*" It is owing to the severity of these terms, that it has pleased the divine goodness to shed so many beams of light upon the path, that conducts to the sanctuary of the true religion. For my own part, I do not conceive, how men can persuade themselves, that they really love the truth, if they refuse to seek it:—and, still less do I conceive, how, if they did seek it, they could fail to find it.

Let then, the man who is now the enemy of our religion, animated with the love of truth, discuss the characters of our religion,---above all, the characters of its sanctity;—and, without any prophetic spirit, I do confidently predict, that soon he will discover, it is divine;—that it is that sacred establishment, which was erected by the hands of our great Redeemer.---Only, to the inquirer into the divinity of our religion, let me recommend, besides the love and desire of the truth, a spirit of sincere humility. Humility, (the thing is not unintelligible) contributes greatly to open the understanding to conceive the sublimity of the mysteries of religion. Hence it is, that the psalmist says, "*believe, and you shall understand.*" Faith leans upon humility. With these dispositions united---the love of truth, candor and humility,---the protestant, if he seek, will soon discover the beauty and wisdom of



catholicity:—he will find it formed, both to satisfy the understanding, and to gratify the heart:—adapted to both, as both are adapted to it. I exhort you, my protestant brethren,—if there be any in this assembly, —to make these dispositions yours. Without them, it is difficult to justify your security, even before the tribunal of human reason; and it will be more difficult far, to justify it before the awful tribunal of your eternal judge.

And, as for you, my fellow-catholics, do you cherish tenderly, and cultivate assiduously, the obligations of your religion. Professing a religion that is holy, see that your lives correspond to your professions. It is thus only, I have before remarked, in the words of my text, you can prove that you *“love God, in deed, and in truth;”*—thus only prove,—to use the words with which Saint John concludes the chapter, from which my text is taken,—that *“Christ Jesus abides in you, and you in him.”*

entirely:—no win and it turned, both to satisfy the understanding, and to gratify the heart:—adapted to the heart, and adapted to it. I exhort you, my Protestant friends:—if there be any in this assembly, who think these dissensions yours, without them, it is difficult to justify your accounts, even before the tribunal of human reason; and it will be more difficult to justify it before the awful tribunal of your eternal judge.

And as for you, my fellow-Christians, do you cherish tenderness, and cultivate zealously; the obligations of your religion. Professing a religion that I hope, see that it in fact corresponds to your professions. It is this case, I have before remarked, in the words of my text, you can prove that you love God in deed, and in words:—thus only prove,—to use the words with which Saint John concludes the chapter, from which my text is taken,—that Christ dwells within in you, and you in him.

And now, my friends, I leave you to the consideration of these things, and to the consideration of the words of my text, which I have before remarked, in the words of my text, you can prove that you love God in deed, and in words:—thus only prove,—to use the words with which Saint John concludes the chapter, from which my text is taken,—that Christ dwells within in you, and you in him.

## SERMON V.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

ON THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH.

*To Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.*

I St. Peter, v. II.

WHETHER we apply these words of my text to God the Father, "*who hath called us to his eternal glory;*"—or to his divine Son, "*in whom we are called,*"—it is equally correct to say, "*to Him belongs glory and dominion, for ever and ever.*" Glory and dominion are the essential properties of them both:—of the Father, because all his perfections are infinite;—of the Son, because he is co-equal to his Father, being "*the splendour of his greatness, and the figure of his substance.*" (Heb. I.) "*He was in the beginning, with God: and by him all things were made.*" St. John, I.

But, "*glory and dominion*" are the property of the Son, not only from his co-equality with his eternal Father, but from the circumstance, also, of his being



the world's Redeemer. They are due to him, even in the sacred capacity of *Man*. As man, Christ Jesus is the victor over death, and the conqueror of hell.—“*He led captivity captive,*”—chaining to his triumphal car all the powers of the world of darkness. “*At his name, every knee shall bow; of those, that are in heaven; on the earth, and beneath the earth; and every tongue shall confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.*” (Phil. ii.)

Yes, my brethren, and if, too, notwithstanding the corruptions and prejudices of the world,—notwithstanding its opposition to the life and maxims of our great Redeemer,—if we consider the honour which is paid to him on this earthly theatre, we shall remark, that even here, “*glory and dominion*” belong peculiarly to him. His “*glory*” is transcendently bright;—brighter far, than the brightest honors that fame, or fiction, or flattery, have hung round the names of heroes, of conquerors, or of gods. Whilst the names of multitudes of these have sunk into oblivion, or contempt,—or whilst, if you will, the names of some who have been useful to mankind, are still recollected with gratitude,—the name of Jesus alone, is the name of honour and greatness; of dignity and wisdom. To it, the universe,—at least, all who are enlightened in the universe—bow down in profound veneration. The monarch and the prince; the greatest and the wisest, esteem it a higher happiness to be the servants of Jesus, than to hold in their hands the fairest sceptre

that sways mankind. They have made his cross, (the instrument, once, of his torments, and the badge of his disgrace) the grandest ornament of their diadems. More honoured, than were anciently the Roman eagles,—the cross they revere, as the chief emblem of their greatness.

Neither is the "*dominion*" of Jesus inferior to his "*glory*." He had said, a little before his triumphant ascent to heaven, "*all power is given to me, in heaven; and on the earth; go therefore, and instruct ALL NATIONS; teaching them to observe all, that I have commanded.*" (Mat. xxviii.) Jesus came down from his eternal throne, and sojourned on earth, in the capacity of a conqueror. He came to establish an empire the most extensive, that the universe had yet beheld,—its boundaries those of the universe itself. "*Go,*" he said to his apostles, "*and teach ALL NATIONS.*" Accordingly, we see these heroic champions fired with the holy ambition of making conquests;—labouring with unabating industry amidst hardships, and dangers, and deaths, to extend the dominion of their master;—converting cities, and provinces, and kingdoms;—rescuing nations from the shades of infidelity;—or to repeat nearly the same comparison, which I used just now,—carrying the standard of the cross into regions, where yet the Roman eagles had not penetrated; and erecting under its banner, upon the ruins of passion and superstition, the empire of virtue and piety.

The wide extent of the empire of Christ was, by the wisdom of the Almighty, designed to be one of the proofs of its divinity,—the mark by which, amid the various institutions of error, reason might discover the true church; distinguishing by it “the “city of the living God,” from the conventicles of Belial. It is hence, that in the figures and predictions of the sacred scriptures, this empire is represented, as stretching itself to the utmost boundaries of the universe—“*from sea to sea.*” “*I will give thee nations,*” says God, alluding to Jesus Christ—“*I will give thee nations, for thy inheritance; and thy dominion shall extend to the extremities of the earth,*” (Ps.) It is hence also, that in the apostles creed, the extent of this dominion is inserted, as one of its necessary and prominent characteristics;—and by us, in our daily recitation of this instrument of our faith, acknowledged, as a distinctive attribute, that marks the superiority of the true church, over all the conventions of human artifice. “*I believe,*” we each of us say, daily, “*in the holy CATHOLIC church.*”

Wherefore, my brethren, having already, in my preceding sermons, discussed two of those important characters; which point out the church of Jesus Christ, I come to day, to the consideration of this third equally momentous feature—its wide or universal dominion. In considering this feature, I shall adhere to the same simple order, which I have hitherto observed,—exhibiting, alternately, the claims which the



catholic church, and the reformed societies present to its possession; and dividing the discussion of these claims into two discourses. In my discourse, this morning, I shall discuss the claims of the catholic church; and adopt, for the order of my discussion, the plan which is comprised in the words of my text;—and which is precisely the plan, that wisdom would adopt in discussing the important subject. In conformity with the construction and import of the words, “*to him be dominion*,” I shall examine, whether there exist in the catholic church that extensive dominion, which is the mark and appendage of the church of Christ. In consistency with the words, “*for ever and ever*.” I shall investigate, whether this extensive dominion have continued always the characteristic of the church. The extent of dominion, and the perpetuity of dominion, are what constitute the signification of the term, and the import of the characteristic,—*catholic*. If, therefore, I shall be so fortunate as to prove, that these are still, and have been always, the appendages of the catholic religion, then shall I also prove, that the catholic religion is divine.

I. That the wide dominion of the true church, and its perennial duration, are indeed, the marks and attributes of its divinity, are truths, which, after the reflections that I have made,—after the slightest attention to the nature of the christian covenant,—after the mere calculation of the signification of the term *catholic*,—it should appear superfluous for me, by any further authorities, to elucidate. They are so plainly the marks

and appendages of the divinity of the church, that not only the professors of the truth, but the teachers of heresy, have admitted them;—the former, triumphantly;—the latter with a degree of candour, which, though honourable, does no credit to their prudence. “*Shew me,*” says St. Austin, addressing himself to the heretics of his time,—“*Shew me the church, if it be yours.—Shew me, that you are united in communion with all those nations, which are blessed with the light of truth.—Shew me a single passage in the sacred scriptures, that would seem to insinuate, that the church could be confined to Africa. Or, if you cannot, then yield to the force of truth. It is we, and no others, that possess the inheritance of Jesus Christ;—because, it is we, that alone are united in communion with THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN WORLD.*”\* “*What*” says St. Jerom, “*becomes of the promises which God made to his Son, that he would give him all nations for his inheritance, if either the church have perished, or be shut up within the limits of an island?*”---Similar to these, are the notions of the whole body of the ancient fathers, respecting the diffusion and perpetuity of the church. They are, I have said, the notions also, of a multitude of protestants. “*The catholicism of the church,*” says the learned Dr. Pearson, “*consisteth,---in universality,---as embracing all sorts of persons; as disseminated, through ALL NATIONS; and as comprehending ALL AGES. The church of Christ, in its*

\*Lib. de Unit. Eccl.

*primary institution, was made of a diffusive nature, to spread itself to all parts and corners of the earth.*"\* "*The christian religion,*" says Dr. Tomline, "*is designed to be universal and perpetual.*"† This is the language of the generality of protestant theologians; whilst, also, it is the language of several of the protestant instruments of faith,—of that of Augsburg, &c. The fact is, as I have remarked,—the predictions of the prophets are so express, respecting the universality and perpetual stability of the church,—the promises of Christ Jesus so forcible,—the writings of the apostles, and the interpretations of every age, so plain and obvious, that it is impossible for aught like candour, if it will speak on the important subject, not to own, that these are the essential appendages of its divinity.

Perhaps, my brethren, you might observe, that when asserting that the protestants admit the universality and perpetuity of the true church, I asserted likewise, that they admitted them, "with a greater share of candor, than of prudence." Well, I repeat that assertion:—I think the concession in them imprudent, in the extreme. For what is the consequence that results from it, in relation to their own religion? Why this;—that if the protestant church be not *universal*; and whoever possesses the most slender acquaintance with geography, knows that it is not universal;—if it be not *perpetual*,—and whoever has the most trifling

\*Exposit. of the Creed.

†Elements, vol. ii.



information of chronology, knows that it is not perpetual,—knows that it is the offspring of yesterday,—then, it is not the true church. The acknowledgment that the church must be universal and perpetual, furnishes the catholic with the most easy of all simple methods of refuting the claims of protestantism. More prudent far would it be in the protestant, if he will persist in error, and teach others to revere it,—to evade the awful question. The sagacity of Luther felt the necessity of this evasion very forcibly; and in order to take off the attention of the deluded followers from its consideration, he, with enlightened ingenuity, translated the ninth article of the creed,—which is, “*I believe in the holy CATHOLIC church,*”—thus, “*I believe in the holy CHRISTIAN church.*” By this translation, he hoped to make them forget the signification and import of the term—*catholic*. So convinced he was of the emptiness of the claims of the reformed establishments, to any thing that is implied under that significant appellation. My brethren, admire the shifts to which men have recourse, when reduced to support the cause of error!

If, therefore, the principles which I have laid down, be correct,—and you have seen that they are admitted even by the men, who are most interested to deny them,—then is the subject of my discussion, on this occasion,—and indeed the determination of the cause of truth,—narrowed to a very simple question. It is reduced to this:—since the true church is universal in

its extent and duration,—is the catholic church of this description? If it be, since there are not two such churches, it is consequently the true church.

Is the catholic church universal in its extent and duration? My brethren, before I enter on the investigation of the pleasing question, permit me to say—not excited by the suggestions of vanity; not impelled by the wish of insulting those, who less fortunate than myself, have not the same motives to exult,—permit me to say:—let ambition boast the extent of earthly conquests, or vanity describe the long duration of certain empires,—the extent of the widest conquests, and the duration of the strongest empires, are trifling, when compared to the extent and duration of the catholic church. Let irreligion proclaim the triumphs of impiety, or the evil genius of heresy exalt the victories of illusion,—what are these, when placed by the side of the triumphs of catholicity? When I contemplate its triumphs,—gratified at the animating scene, I again exclaim:—yes, and let fanaticism, if it please, continue to deride my religion; let it solemnly pronounce, as it does incessantly, that “*Rome is fallen;*” —or predict, as it does, when more modest,—that “*Rome is falling;*”—I laugh at the pitiful artifices, however much they be calculated to impose, and do impose, on ignorance;—I pity the vapid exultation.—My brethren, if there be any institution on earth, whose extent conveys the idea of grandeur;—any establishment whose duration impresses the notion of

stability;—any empire that is grand, awful, magnificent, and venerable, it is the empire of catholicity; and the empire of catholicity alone. It is in the catholic church alone, that, either amid the various conventicles of religion, or the various conventions of civil policy, you can trace aught, that is comprised under the signification of the term—*catholic*.

But, that you may be enabled to form an idea of the greatness of the dominion of the catholic church, bid your imaginations, in the first instance, run over the different regions of the globe; and interrogating, successively, the inhabitants who people them,—ask, what is the religion which they adore? Looking through these regions, you discover every where the trophies of religion;—and interrogating their inhabitants, you hear multitudes, in them all, declare, that these trophies are the trophies of catholicity;—that the religion which they revere, is the same which you and I profess. This is the case in nations the most widely separated from each other,—in nations, where ambition never planted the Roman standard; and where the name of an Alexander was never heard:—in nations, the most different from each other in their habits; the most abhorrent in their prejudices; the most opposite in their interests:—in nations, where error spreads its toils; and where persecution holds out its terrors.\* There, *in them all*, the catholic

\* Super et Garamantas et Indos

Proferet imperium: jacet extra sidera tellus,



church possesses a host of members; she sees her altars rise; her incense smoke; her sacrifices bleed:—she sees verified those two remarkable prophecies,—“*I will give the nations for thy inheritance;*” (Ps.)—and, “*IN EVERY PLACE, there is offered to my name a pure sacrifice.*” (Mal.) If the catholic church have any boundaries, they are those of the universe.

However, lest all this, to any, should seem to resemble declamation, or appear, in me, the dictate of over-weening confidence, I will, for a few moments, instead of generally asserting, that catholicity is every where adored,—conduct your reason through several, and the chief of those nations, (although still merely naming them) where her temples rise.

In running over the roll of the names of the nations where catholicity subsists, it is natural that in the first place, I should make mention of that country—Italy, —whose holy capital, until yesterday, was for almost eighteen hundred years, the Chair of Peter, and the seat of catholic unity. Italy, you all know it, is entirely catholic. So too, with the exception of a few individuals scattered thinly throughout their provinces or cities—are Spain, Portugal, France, Austria Bohemia, and Poland; the rich and populous provinces of the Netherlands, and the kingdoms of Sicily and Sardi-

Extra anni solisque vias, ubi cœlifer Atlas

Axem humero torquet, stellis ardentibus aptum.

VING.

nia. In the greater part of the provinces of Germany, and the kingdom of Hungary, the chief portion of the inhabitants are catholic. It is the same in Ireland, and in most of the cantons of Swisserland. In these countries, the proportion of the catholic natives exceeds considerably, that of any individual sect of heresy; or even of the whole body of their dissenting inhabitants. In the kingdoms, where protestantism has superseded our holy faith; and erected new fabrics on the ruins of our ancient altars---in England, Holland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark,---even there, the members of our church, though persecuted once, and still frowned upon,---at least frowned upon in this country,---are numerous and respectable. And, why, too, in these kingdoms, may I not appeal to protestantism itself, as to a striking voucher of the catholicity of our holy church? Protestantism is a branch lopt off, but a few years past, from the great tree, on which we are engrafted. But a few years past, the parents of the present protestants were catholic. The temples, from which their violence has driven us; the revenues of their clergy; the endowments of their universities; the principal monuments of exalted charity, and the noblest vestiges of the arts, are catholic:---they were yesterday the property and the ornaments of our religion. Thus is protestantism itself a splendid attestation of the universality of our religion. However, passing on from this consideration,---which yet is fraught with serious motives for reflection,---let me

continue the enumeration of her triumphs. In Turkey and Russia,---in the widely extended territories and islands belonging to those powers, the catholic church has an immense multitude of subjects. There too, she has her altars, her sacrifice, and her incense. So that in Europe, at least---in every kingdom and corner of Europe,---the catholic religion is not only known, but very generally professed. It is *alone* professed in many kingdoms; and it is partially professed *in all*.

And, if quitting Europe, we contemplate the diffusion of catholicity through the other less enlightened portions of the globe---through America, Asia and Africa, in all and each of these, we trace illustrious monuments of our faith.

In America, from the frozen mountains of Canada, through the burning regions of Mexico, Peru, the Brazils, &c. to the extremity of Chili, the catholic church sees very few individuals besides her own children. The subjects of the comparatively small tract of country, that is called the United States, with a few still uninstructed clans of the native pagans, are all, that in America are not catholic;---whilst also, among the former, the number of catholics is very considerable.

In Asia, where vice and superstition have erected their thrones; and where, amid the cries of passion and the vociferations of fanaticism, it is so difficult for religion to make her gentle voice be heard,---even in Asia, the catholic church possesses worshippers. She



sees there her temples rise, amid the monuments of error: and amid the noise of passion, she makes the lessons of piety be respected. In China and Japan; in Syria and Persia; on the banks of the Indus, and the borders of the Euphrates;—in short, from the shores of the Red Sea, to those of the Corea; and from the frozen gulfs of Siberia, to the sultry extremity of Cape Comorin, the catholic religion has votaries; and in some of these regions, its votaries are numerous.

In Africa, the multitudes that do homage to our institute, owing to the greater thinness of its population, and to the still greater want of civilization, are inferior to those of the other quarters of the universe.—Still, are the professors of catholicity scattered over these wild and inhospitable regions. They are not unfrequent in a few of the many provinces of Africa, —in those, where aught like learning has retained a trifling influence,—in Egypt, Nubia, Abyssinia. In these, mixed with the professors of some of the most ancient heresies, who differ from the catholic only in a few speculative tenets, the worshippers of our religion are many. So likewise, it is in various other places, along the extended line of its burning shores; and even in its frightful deserts—those barren scenes, where hardly life can live. Even there, it is a fact, the scions from the tree of catholicity have been planted; and although it would seem that the dews of heaven could, with difficulty, fall upon them, they vegetate and live. In short, my brethren, without

making any further enumeration of the trophies of catholicity; without mentioning a variety of islands, in which also, there exists a countless multitude of catholics---this circumstance is true, that wherever civilization subsists, and wherever civilization has once subsisted;--wherever letters flourish, and wherever they have flourished formerly,---there, catholicity has her adorers---men, who believe her doctrines, venerate here mysteries, and submit to her injunctions.

It is not, here, the place to deduce the result of comparisons: I shall do that hereafter. But, if here, anticipating the result of the comparison, which I am enabling you to form, I were to say, what is the difference between the multitude of the members of the catholic church, and the number of the members of any individual sect of protestantism,---what the disproportion between the measure of the space, which catholicity and any individual religion of protestantism occupy, upon the face of the globe,---I should with accuracy say, that in point of numbers, each sect of protestantism dwindles in the contrast, into insignificance; and in point of space, it hardly fills a corner.

The description, you have observed, which I have made of the empire of our holy church, is the description of its empire, at the present period, when, from the spread of vice; the prevalence of irreligion, and after the horrors of a dreadful revolution, its greatness, it might naturally be supposed, must be considerably diminished. Had I described its situation, at an era

preceding the introduction of irreligion and the ravages of that revolution; my description, perhaps, would have been more striking than that,---striking as it is,---which I have offered to your contemplation. But, had I depicted the greatness of the church, at an epoch preceding the reformation,---before the stealths of heresy had thinned its members, and the spirit of innovation had superseded the docility of faith,---at an epoch, when nearly the whole of christian Europe was catholic,---the portrait, to your imagination, would have been more pleasing still. The portrait of catholic Europe, at the period immediately antecedent to Luther's schism, which also was a period enlightened by the beams of science,---that portrait, comprising so many great empires, states, provinces, and cities,---exhibiting so many illustrious characters and distinguished personages---is a gratifying testimony of the divinity of our religion. And, such was Europe, at that period. However, the portrait which I have just presented, is sufficient to attest this:---that the empire of the catholic church, even now, is very widely diffused, ---sufficiently diffused to verify the magnificent promises, that were made to the christian institute, and to fulfil those words of my text, alluding to its divine author---"*to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.*"

II. The proof, *at any given period*, that there exists a religious society, which is sufficiently diffused to fulfil the promises made to the christian dispensation,



is the proof,—the certain proof,—that such society is divine; or, in other words, that such society is the true church of Jesus Christ. The reason is, that a diffusion corresponding to these promises, is the prerogative and characteristic of the true church, and of the true church, *only*;—a prerogative and characteristic, appropriate, exclusive, unalienable, and perpetual. If such were not the case, and this prerogative and characteristic of the truth could become the appendage and property of error, then would reason be misled; and without the violation of any law of piety conscientiously be permitted to believe the dreams of human artifice;—an evil this, which is directly repugnant to all the injunctions of the sacred scriptures, and to the dictates of enlightened wisdom. So, that, in fact, the proof that any christian establishment is sufficiently diffused *at the present day*, to realise the characteristic of universality, is the manifest proof, that such establishment is the church of Jesus Christ.

However, having said, in consonance to the words of my text—“*to him be dominion FOR EVER AND EVER;*” and in conformity to what likewise is the truth,—that a wide extent of diffusion is the *permanent* feature of the divinity of the church, you may perhaps deem it proper, that, as I have shewn you, that the catholic religion possesses the feature of wide diffusion at present, I should also shew you, she has possessed it, through the lapse of preceding ages, from the era of her institution. My brethren, the demonstration of

this proposition, although conformable, certainly, to the nature of my plan, can hardly, if well considered, appear essential. For if,—as it is,—extent of dominion be the unalienable and exclusive prerogative of the true church, and the catholic church possess that prerogative at present,—then does it follow evidently, that as she possesses it now, so she has possessed it *always*, —“*for ever and ever.*” In fact, save the catholic church, scarcely did their exist, for many ages, any other church;—any other church, at least, to which, without the grossest absurdity, the characteristic of universality could be applied. The christian universe, for many ages, was almost entirely catholic. Hence, repeating what I have said before,—if at present, the empire of the catholic church be the voucher of its divinity,—the empire, during the long series of these ages, is a voucher which renders it to the feelings of piety, incontestible.

The more the evidences of our religion are considered, the more triumphant and venerable does she appear. Let learning, therefore, and curiosity consult in the historic page, what, in each revolving century, has been the state of christianity; or what, at various periods, has been the diffusion of the catholic church. They will trace in her, always, that extent of empire, which corresponds to the characteristic of universality. They will see her, at every period, magnificently great—stretched through a multitude of kingdoms, and still stretching out her arms to embrace

fresh kingdoms;—planted in the fairest and most civilized nations, and still planting her victorious standards in nations the most barbarious and unpolished. They will see her pastors animated always, by that holy zeal for conquest, which fired the minds of the first apostles of the christian cause: and led by this zeal, they will observe them, in every age, conducting nations in triumph from the shades of infidelity. Thus, if it be admitted,—and what protestant will not admit it,—that in the third and fourth centuries of the christian era, the church was sufficiently diffused to answer the import of the term *catholic*, and to fulfil the splendid promises of her future greatness, (these are circumstances which St. Austin and many of the holy fathers, not only admit, but urgently press upon the attention of their adversaries,) then, is it impossible not to admit also, that since those periods, she has retained the same prerogatives. Since those periods, so far from having decreased, she has increased her greatness.—She has extended her conquest, and added new kingdoms to the sacred fold. For example,—to refer to a few of her many conquests, in separate ages:—in the fifth age, we behold the catholic church subdue to Christ, Ireland; a considerable part of Scotland, and large portions of the empire of Gaul. In the sixth, we see the conversion of several states of this nation, and of several provinces in Germany. In the seventh, we witness the complete subjugation of this country to the catholic religion; and the light of faith we con-



temple beaming upon the Netherlands and Franconia.—In the eighth century, we remark Wilfrid, an Englishman, converting Saxony, Westphalia, and several other provinces;—and Cyril and Methodius conducting the Sclavonians, Bohemians, and Moravians into the pale of the church.---In the ninth, we observe the rays of truth fall benignant upon a multitude of nations in the north,---on the Russians, Swedes, Poles, &c. In the tenth,—but, why this long enumeration? Suffice it, my brethren, to repeat, that looking through the avenue of time, from the present day, up to the periods when Austin and the fathers boasted of the church's universality,---you, in every age, behold her, at least equally diffused, as she was at those happy eras; and in every age, you see her adding to her diffusion, by the conversion of pagan nations,-- verifying incessantly those words of the apostle,---“*their sound went forth into all the earth; and their words unto the ends of the world.*” (Rom.)\*

But, my brethren;—and here a painful reflection comes to repress the feelings of satisfaction;—let me not, in thus placing before you the magnificent scene of the triumphs and dominion of the church, be understood to insinuate, that its triumphs were never

\* What a splendid illustration of this text did the sixteenth century present, in the labours of Xaverius and his companions; and, in the successes of their labours, what a splendid compensation for the losses which catholicity had sustained by the ravages of the reformation! See the Accounts of Xaverius's Missions.

checked by losses; its dominion never impaired by misfortunes;—or that along with the causes, which it had often to exult in the increase of its empire, it had not also occasions to weep sometimes over its ravages. It is a truth, which I commemorate with regret, that in every age of the christian dispensation, the losses which the church has sustained, by the desertions of its subjects, have been considerable. There is not an age, in which heresy, more or less infectious; or persecution, more or less severe, has not sprung up to thin their numbers; and in certain instances, to lay waste some of the fairest portions of the garden of the church. I need not describe these calamities. The only question is,—did they militate against the universality of the sacred institution? Certainly not. They were the calamities only, which its divine author had foretold should befall it; and which are the too natural results of human liberty, acting under the guidance of human malice. Their effects were local; confined to certain districts, or limited to certain kingdoms:—never extending over the whole empire of the church, nor affecting the greater multitude of its members.—And even,—such is the greatness of the divine mercy!—if curiosity will refer to the periods of these calamities, it will find, that the period of each loss, was the period of some fresh conquest; and of a conquest, which compensated amply for the loss.

Yes, my brethren, I do not know, whether from the occasions of the very evils, which I am depre-

cating, I might not produce one of the most forcible attestations of the diffusion and stability of the church. It was on the occasion of the losses, which she sustained by the ravages and stealths of heresy, that we see her so often convoked her *general councils*,—those venerable and grand assemblies, in which her pastors from almost every nation, in solemn deliberation met together; labouring by their piety to stay the mischiefs of error; and by their decisions, shewing what was the faith, not only of their respective dioceses, but of the whole church of Jesus Christ. These councils, placed at regular distances along the vista of time, are very expressive vouchers of the greatness of the church, and of the perpetuity of its faith.—It was on the occasion of the injuries which the church sustained from the violence of persecution, that we witness also, and admire, the piety and the heroism of her children. The effect of persecution is rather to exalt than to depress the church. It is a storm that lifts up the sacred vessel; although a number of individuals who are in it perish. Thus, in our days, we have seen in the French revolution, the effects of persecution. A great multitude perished in that dreadful tempest. But, surely, wisdom will not say, that the visibility, or the universality of the church has been affected by it. The visibility of the church was then honourably conspicuous, in the triumphs of the hosts of heroes, whose piety did more than counterbalance the impiety of the men who disgracefully fell. And, as for the circum-



stance of universality—so far are the mischiefs of that revolution from having impaired, they have rather increased it. France remains catholic;—the good grain, indeed, well separated from the chaff;—whilst the legions of its priesthood, who were banished from its shores, have carried, and are carrying still, the light of faith to almost every nation of the globe. So that in reality, even from the misfortunes of religion, and from the very evils at which fanaticism rejoices, as the means of its annihilation, may be adduced proofs of its diffusion and stability.

There are many other arguments, besides those which I have cited, by which learning and curiosity may ascertain the perennial greatness of the empire of catholicity. Consulting the rolls of history, and inquiring what, in every enlightened nation, and in every age, till the age of the reformation, was the religion of the distinguished characters who occasionally adorned them, they will find, that with hardly an exception, it was catholic. Appealing to the annals of piety, and asking, what in the various churches of the christian world, was the faith of their pastors,—they will discover, that in like manner, this too was catholic. It is peculiarly easy, in many of the great churches of christianity, to trace the faith of their pastors, through a long series of ages. Their succession forms a chain, which reaches from the earliest periods, to the present day; and whose every link we can touch, and count distinctly. Investigating, in those countries, where

either christianity has once subsisted, or where it subsists at present,—the *monuments* which they exhibit, and interrogating these, (monuments have voices, my brethren, that speak plainly,)—it will be found that they all loudly attest the greatness and the antiquity of our religion. “*We are catholics,*” the venerable ruins say, “*and the emblems even, which still adorn us, shew it.*” It is so, likewise, not only in the monuments, which were once, or are yet, sacred to religion, but in a great variety of other vestiges. The proofs of the ancient splendour of catholicity are legible on almost every object, that has seen the tide of ages roll away,—on the palaces of princes,—on the castles of the great,—on the gates of cities,—on the asylums of charity,—on the tombs of the dead. They may be read in the constitutions and laws of kingdoms—in the foundations and rules of universities—in the customs and peculiarities of the vulgar. The blindest may trace all this in our own nation, very evidently. And it is so in nearly every other. There is hardly a nation, that is not full of monuments, which declare the universality of our religion.

III. To whoever has seriously considered the arguments, by which I have been establishing the duration of catholicity, it will appear almost superfluous, by any other evidences, to illustrate that important truth. It is indeed, possible, that prejudice may object to those arguments, that,—“they are very general and indis-

tinct,---proving, it is true, that in almost every nation, and in every age, there has existed a widely diffused religion,---a catholic religion,---but not proving that this religion,---its principles and doctrines,---were in every age the same,---in every age, the identical religion which the catholic believes at present. It is the essence of the true religion to remain unchanged,---to have descended, and to descend always, down the stream of time, without corruption or alteration. If, therefore, I undertake distinctly to prove, that the catholic religion of the present period is, indeed, the true religion, then should I also distinctly prove, that it has never undergone any alteration, and that it is the same, which revealed originally to mankind, has, during the course of eighteen centuries, formed always the object of the veneration of the orthodox believer." Certainly, my brethren, these observations are correct, and consonant quite to the expression of my text---"*to him be dominion, FOR EVER AND EVER.*" The arguments which I have employed, might, indeed, suffice to satisfy them; yet will I reply to them distinctly.

To prove, then, that the religion which the catholic believes at present, is the same precisely with that, which the true faithful have, successively, in each age, believed before,---two modes of demonstration may be adopted,---the one *positive*, evincing by the comparison of our doctrines with those of preceding centuries, that they are alike;---the other *negative*, shewing, from analogy, and from the nature of various circumstances,



that no revolution has introduced, no alteration vitiated, the system which we profess. The former—that is, the positive mode of demonstration, belongs properly to the subject of my discourse, next Sunday; in which, having to prove that the catholic religion is *apostolical*, I have, consequently, positively to prove, that it is the same, which coming from the apostles, has been always professed by the successors of the apostles. In the remaining part of this discourse, I will therefore employ the latter mode,—shewing you, that our religion is not,—could not be,—the creature of innovation, the dictate of error, the effect of revolution:—consequently, that what the catholic believes at present, each age has believed before. The negative mode of demonstration is not feeble, or devoid of the power of conveying conviction. It is often peculiarly forcible,—more forcible, sometimes, according to the canons of philosophy, than the positive demonstration itself. In the consideration of the object to which I am proceeding to apply it, your good sense, I am sure, will find it invincible. Let us enter on its consideration.

If the catholic religion,—the religion, which you, my brethren, and I revere,—have any other authors than Christ Jesus and his apostles,—if it owe its introduction to any occasion or revolution, at any period that is subsequent to the introduction of christianity,—then, I contend, it is evident, that the authors, the occasion, the revolution, and the period would be

known. For,—the reason is extremely simple,---if the authors even of every minor innovation,---if the occasion, the revolution, the period, which gave birth, to every trifling heresy,---if these be known, and often minutely detailed in the rolls of history,---how difficult it is to believe, or rather how impossible to believe, that the authors, the occasion, the revolution, and the period which gave birth to catholicity, (if its birth be subsequent to the age of the apostles,) should be unknown,—should never, by any one, have been mentioned, noticed, whispered, or insinuated? Only for a moment consider the nature of the catholic religion:—its *principles* placing restraints upon every passion, and humbling the pride of the human understanding;—its *practices* imposing a great variety of uneasy duties and painful obligations;—its *members* comprising, for many ages, all the enlightened portion of mankind;—its *extent*, reaching throughout the universe. Why, think you, that if either it were the offspring of policy; the creature of innovation; or the effect of that cheating thing called *reformation*,—think you, that the introduction and establishment of such an institution could possibly be unknown? The man who can believe this, must be totally unread both in the history of the human mind, and in the history of human events;---or else he must possess a credulity, that will devour the grossest nonsense.

I have said, that the authors even of the minor innovations in religion, and the occasions and periods of

such innovations, are known, and detailed in the rolls of history. Thus, going back to ages very far removed from the present, we know, for example, that Arius, Nestorius, Donatus, Pelagius, were the authors of the sects, which bear their respective names. We know the characters of the men; the occasions which called forth their errors; the date almost of the day which broached them; the circumstances which attended their propagation; the process of their ecclesiastical and civil condemnation; and the effects which they produced on the minds and conduct of the public. Thus, likewise, in regard of protestantism, we know the whole history of its authors, and the whole history of its establishment. Its authors, we know were once all of them catholics:—Luther, a monk of Wittemberg; Calvin, a canon of Noyon; Zuinglius, an archdeacon of Zurich,—with a long list of priests, friars and religious, who left the parent institute; spurned the laws of chastity; and formed societies apart. We know the series of the proceedings, transactions and effects, which marked the revolution that they produced. In these cases, and in the cases of heresies and innovations very inferior to these in their consequences, the most minute accounts are preserved in the historic page.

It is a circumstance, also to be remarked in the history of the heresies, which I have named in the earlier ages, that their peculiar tenets were, all of them, of a nature merely speculative; neither imposing



restraints upon the passions, nor creating any unpleasant obligations in practice. And yet, what was the consequence of their introduction? A general outcry was instantly raised against the innovations:—the pastors of the church came zealously forward to warn their flocks of the threatening danger:—and the flocks, sensible of the danger, stood ardently forward to repel it. An alarm pervaded nearly the whole christian universe:—and in various instances, cities, provinces and nations rose up in arms to support the cause of truth. And can you then imagine,—reasoning, as it is always wise to reason from analogy,—that a religion like ours, which is a system of severity and constraint; which combats the dearest interests of self-love; and touches the sensibilities of reason in the tenderest part;—can you imagine, that such a religion could possibly have been established without opposition; without noise, and without notice? Or if its establishment did excite opposition, and noise, and notice, can you imagine the reason why—as in the cases of those comparatively unimportant heresies—Nestorianism, Donatism, Pelagianism—the opposition, the noise and the notice, are not written in the page of history?—What! a religion like that of catholicity, including continents, and empires, and kingdoms; and in its influences and operations, affecting the whole series of human conduct, established, and established every where, without opposition! Or, if any where opposed, the opposition no where noticed in the rolls of time!

I repeat it,—the man who can believe such absurdities, can believe any thing. And yet, my brethren, it is true, that referring to the monuments of every age, you trace no vestige of any imaginary opposition to any imaginary intrusions of catholicity:—referring to history, you find no mention of such intrusions.

But, in order to be yet more completely convinced, that the catholic religion is not the creature of innovation, let any, the most bigoted of its enemies, fixing upon any given period that he pleases, for the supposed revolution,—calculate only a few of the many obstacles which must have combated its establishment. It must of course, be admitted in the event of such revolution, that previous to it, the religion of the christian world was different from that, which such revolution introduced. It must, in the protestant supposition, be admitted, that the depositum of faith was until then entire; and that the faithful until then believed doctrines, and venerated practices, true, divine and holy; which they now exchanged for doctrines and practices, false, human and corrupted! This supposition is essential, if catholicity be a new religion; or a religion, whose alleged corruptions, at any time, superseded the purity of revelation. Behold, then, the history of the process of the circumstances and effects, which, in the common order and nature of things, must have awaited the momentous change. An individual—let it be who it may,—suppose him pope, prelate, priest; suppose him the man reputed the wisest among the

learned, or the best among the good,—urged by ambition, or policy, or passion, or fanaticism; or even prompted, if you will, by pious, but mistaken motives,—proposes a new system of belief—a departure from the true doctrines and practices of revelation; and from the doctrines and practices, which the faithful have hitherto revered and cultivated, as the sources of their salvation. This is the first step towards the supposed revolution. Now, my brethren, without any reference to the nature of the new system, what think you, must have been the feelings and effects, which this proposal must obviously have produced on the public mind? I need not say it,—the first feelings of the public would have been astonishment and horror;—the first effect, opposition. The guardians of the church,—the aged and venerable pastors, who had grown gray under the shade of the sanctuary, and who, perhaps, had bled for its preservation,—the hosts of clergy, and the great body of the priesthood, all devoted to the service of religion, and who had made its study and cultivation the chief objects of their care,—these, piously indignant at the insults offered to the truth, and to the God of Truth; and alarmed for the security of the faithful, would instantly, and together, have raised their voices to expose the innovation, and to warn the public against its danger. It is impossible to suppose, that in the minds, of such men, the interests of religion would, on such occasion, have been extinguished. To suppose that, it must be contended, that either by the effects of



the strongest Lethean draught, they had, all at once, forgotten their religion, or by a general lethargy, had become indifferent to it. Without the absurd admission of one or other of these absurd suppositions, it is evident that the pastors of the church would have opposed the attempt at innovation; and that its establishment, if ever it were established, must have been the work of time, of industry, of labour, of contests, and of violence. And, do the annals of time, or the monuments of ages, present to us any period of the innovation, which I have been supposing; or of any consequent opposition to its introduction? My brethren, not a vestige subsists of either. Therefore, do I conclude it manifest, in the highest degree of evidence, that the protestant assertion, "that catholicity is the offspring of innovation,"—is a fable.

But, let me, if the thing be possible, yet add to the evidence of the above demonstration. Let it, for a moment, be absurdly admitted, that by an incomprehensible act of oblivion, the pastors of the church, had, on the occasion of the proposed change of faith, forgotten their religion; or by an equally wonderful act of indifference, conniving at its corruption, had presented no opposition to the innovation,—still there remains the necessity and the difficulty of accounting for its propagation and adoption among the faithful;—and of accounting, too, for its propagation and adoption, without the attempt to resist its mischiefs. It may, perhaps, be easy to mislead the ignorant and the

vulgar;— although even to mislead them, requires art and ingenuity; violence and declamation. But, it surely is not easy to mislead *the whole body* of the faithful. Among these, there are always many who know their religion, and who love it: and these, consequently, aware of the sin of innovation, would forcibly oppose its intrusion. But, my brethren, at the period to which I have been alluding, when the protestant pretends the corruptions of catholicity were introduced, all this is peculiarly true. At that imaginary period, I have remarked, and it is admitted, the depositum of revelation was entire. Religion, at that period, was the great object of general solicitude, and of public veneration. If the faithful possessed any knowledge, it was the knowledge of their religion: and if they possessed any strong attachment, it was the attachment to their religion. Its doctrines they had heard incessantly inculcated to them in their assemblies: they had repeated them often; and meditated on them daily, in the bosoms of their families: they had treasured them up in their hearts, as the only points of wisdom that were worth keeping in those hallowed places. Piety, then, entered into all their employments and occupations; and even the infant, before it could lisp the language of reason, had learnt to love and repeat the doctrines of religion. Hence, put the case, that an attempt were made to corrupt the public faith;—to ingraft, according to the protestant imputation, the supposed corruptions of catholicity upon the uncorrupted principles of the truth,---to introduce a new

religion:---what would, plainly, have been the consequence? What would have been the feelings and the conduct of the faithful? What would they have said? Struck with the novelty of the circumstance, they would immediately have said, "this is the first time that ever such doctrines have been proposed to our belief. Our pastors never taught them before:—our parents never told us of them:—we never heard them in our churches: nor did we ever read them in the works of the men, whom we have been instructed to consider as the lights of our religion. Therefore, these doctrines are new:—*therefore, they are false*;—and therefore, if truth and the interests of salvation, which are dependant on truth, be dear to us, it is our duty to reject them." To seduce men from their religion who reasoned thus—and it is thus they must have reasoned, in the case of the event which I have been supposing, would evidently be extremely difficult. Innovation could not steal in unobserved, because they knew their religion:—it could not enter unopposed, because they loved it. And do the annals of time, or the monuments of ages, present to us any period of the innovation, which I have been supposing,—or of any consequent opposition to its introduction? My brethern, not a vestige. Therefore, do I again conclude, that the protestant assertion, "that catholicity is the offspring of innovation,"—is a fable.

The above arguments are so plain, so demonstrative of the truth, which I am endeavouring to establish,



that without any further illustration of it, I could here rest assured, that they have convinced your good sense, as they satisfy mine. Such, I dare say it, is the case. However since the question is vitally important, and since all do not see objects in the same points of view, permit me, again intruding on your patience, to continue the discussion. Behold then, I make the general supposition, that prompted by interest, or excited by ambition, an individual is determined to attempt, and does attempt, an innovation in religion,—attempts to cheat the credulity of the faithful into error. What I ask myself, and I ask you, are, in the obvious order of things and according to the maxims of experience,—what are the plans that he would pursue,—what the nature of the doctrines that he would teach,—what the description of the practices that he would establish? His plans, if he aimed at the general adoption of his new religion, would not surely be such, as to render it the general interest of the public, and particularly the general interest of public prejudice, to oppose him. His doctrines would not consist of the grossest absurdities that the fancy could devise, mysteries impervious to reason, to the senses, and to the imagination. Or if they did consist of such absurdities, they would not, at the same time, be painful to the passions, hostile to liberty, and displeasing to self-love. His practices, if he inculcated new ones, would not be made up of hardships, restrictions, mortifications, and self-denials. The man who attempted to innovate by

methods such as these, would be a very sorry proficient in the knowledge of the human heart; and would make few proselytes to his religion. The great herd of society would laugh him to contempt:—or if any were so absurd as to believe and follow him, they would be a small portion of enthusiasts—for there always will be enthusiasts,—who admire nothing so much as folly. No, the plans, the doctrines, the practices of our innovator, if he entertained any rational expectation of success—if he hoped, that his doctrines were to form the code of general faith, and his practices the rule of general conduct, must, having no divine recommendations—be measured to the public taste, to public prejudices, to public partialities, and to public inclinations. It was thus precisely, that in the protestant innovations, the wisdom of the reformers acted. They did not propose to their hearers, or to the public, a new code of mysterious doctrines, more mysterious than those which hitherto they had believed; nor did they impose upon them fresh restraints and practices, more painful than those of catholicity. Had they done that, they had the sagacity to feel, that the multitude would at once have shut their ears to their addresses. With the true wisdom of innovators, and with a degree of penetration, which shewed that they possessed a knowledge of the human heart, and had studied well the artifices of seduction,—they did directly the reverse. They ridiculed our mysteries as fables; and our practices they insulted as acts of tyranny:—not

indeed, denying every mystery, nor entirely setting aside every practice of piety,—but reducing the former to a comparatively trifling number; and rendering the latter so convenient, as not to incommode even the softness of sensuality. They flattered liberty, the senses, the imagination, the passions, —all the weaknesses of the head and of the heart. And by these methods (the thing is easy, where men are permitted to do it) they soon formed a society. The multitude listened to them with attention, because they were flattered;—and, because they were flattered, they, too naturally, believed them.

Now, my brethren, apply these maxims, which are the dictate of common sense, and which have experience to confirm them,—apply them to the protestant imputation, that “catholicity is the offspring of innovation.” What is the nature of the doctrines of the catholic religion,—what the character of its practices? Its doctrines, you all know it, consist, many of them, of mysteries the most impenetrable, and the most humiliating to human reason; remote from every thing, that either the wildness of the wildest imagination, or the sublimity of the most exalted genius, could have suggested. If false, they are the most singular, the boldest, the most absurd opinions, that ever the most daring innovator intruded upon mankind. The practices of our religion are congenial to our doctrines.—There is nothing in them to gratify the senses, or to please the passions. On the contrary, they are severe,



repulsive, painful, and mortifying. And, what, therefore, is the consequence? Why, this:—that it could neither have been the idea, nor the interest, of any self-commissioned individual to teach our doctrines;—nor his inclination, or benefit, to propose our practices.\* Or, if indeed, any be so unwise as to contend, that it might have been the interest of an individual to propose such code,---surely they will not contend, that it could have been the interest, also, of the public to have adopted it. It is clear, that it was their interest to have rejected it; whilst the mere circumstance of its novelty was the evidence of its falsehood. Thus, my brethren,---in order to bring my argument nearer to your understandings,---suppose, for example, that I, or an individual more eloquent far, and wiser much, than I am, were to propose to you a new code of faith,---a code superadding new mysteries to the mysteries which you believe at present; and new practices to your present observances,---and mysteries too, more impenetrable; practices more painful, than those which you now revere---tell me, what would be the ideas, what the feelings, which you would experience at such proposal,---above all, if I could show you no diploma, or commission, or attestation, to recommend it? To make such proposal, must be, in me, the effect of fol-

\* The sect of Montanus is perhaps the only exception which history presents, from the truth of these observations. But then, this sect consisted only of a small handful of fanatics.

ly; because it is evident, that I should have no chance or prospect of inducing your good sense to give me credit. The wise would deride it; the learned insult or pity it; even the ignorant would despise it. All would reject it. You feel, my brethren, the import and the force of this appeal to your understandings; you feel, that any attempt by me to change the faith, which you have cherished from your infancy, as divine, would be vain; and that still vainer would be the attempt, to change the religion of the catholic universe. And what, again, is the consequence? Why, this;—*since men are nearly, in every age, the same;—and since similar causes, in each age, produce nearly similar effects;—*therefore, going back to any period which the protestant may please to indicate, when, as he maintains, the ambition of some pope, or the fanaticism of some prelate, proposed an innovation in the established creed,—going back to that period, just similar to yours, in the case which I have been supposing, would have been the reasoning of the faithful;—and just similar to yours, their conduct. Knowing their religion *then*, as well as you do *now*, they would, consequently, at once have discovered the innovation; and loving their religion, as you do, they would consequently, have reprobated the innovation. And then too, seeing that it had nothing to recommend it, ---nothing either to satisfy the understanding, or to gratify the heart,—seeing this, both the wise and the unwise; the good and the bad, would have laughed it to scorn. If, my brethren, you append this circum-

stance of the nature of our religion, to the circumstance of its diffusion, you have a satisfactory proof that it is not,—that it cannot be,—the creature of innovation. And, if again, to the two former circumstances you append this third,—that history presents no vestige of such revolution,—you have as evident a demonstration as mathematics themselves can furnish, that no such revolution has occurred. The nature of catholic faith is the proof, that it is not human:—the diffusion of catholic faith is the proof, that it is divine.

IV. I could produce another, partly negative, and partly positive, attestation of the perpetuity of the catholic religion, in the conduct and silence of its enemies, who, from very early periods of the christian dispensation, have been separated from the church; and in the identity of many of their doctrines with ours,—particularly the identity of those doctrines which the protestants contend are the effect “of popish innovations.” This attestation, if well considered, is extremely striking, although, I shall not, on this occasion, make it the subject of a detailed discussion.

It is a fact, then, my brethren, that there are still subsisting, in various parts of the universe, men,—heretics, whose forefathers were cut off from the society of the church, in the early ages of its existence,—in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries;—and who still retain, and always have retained, the same doctrines and practices, which at the era of their separation, they believed and cultivated. These heretics are the Nestorians; the Eutychians; the Jacobites; the



Copts, and large portions of the Oriental churches.—From the two-fold circumstance of the silence and doctrines of these men,—I deduce, as I have said, a negative partly, and partly a positive proof of the perpetuity of catholicity.

I deduce, in the first place, from their silence, a negative proof. For, my brethren, I think this proposition certain, that, if at any period since the seclusion of these heretics from the pale of their parent church, the doctrines of that church had altered,—if that institute had itself become heretical, which had excommunicated them for heresy,—they would have told the odious tale; they would have published the innovation; they would, by insulting the church, which they maintained, had insulted them,—with exultation, have avenged the injustice, which, in their ideas, she had offered to their orthodoxy. Heresy is always watchful and violent; and always jealous of that church, whose power and piety have shut the doors of her sanctuary against its followers. It seeks every occasion, and exults in every opportunity of reproach. If, therefore, the catholic church had innovated, think you, that these men would have let pass unremarked, the splendid moment for retaliation?—Think you, they would not have echoed back the reproach of heresy, by shewing, that the church itself was the apostate? Certainly, such would have been the case. It was in the nature of heresy, and in the nature of hostility to do it:—it was even proper and becoming. And yet,

in no age, nor in any place, do the heretics, whom I have named;—although, neither their vigilance was asleep, nor their animosity appeased—although their numbers have been always considerable, and their learning, at certain periods, respectable,—yet, in no age, nor in any place, do they, or any individual among them, come forward with these reproaches, and by these recriminations console the uneasiness of their own disgrace. To what cause must we attribute the phenomenon? My brethren, to this:—that they had no opportunity to do it.

I said, also, that the identity of many of the doctrines of these heretics, with the doctrines of the catholic church, is even a positive attestation of the perpetuity of these doctrines. This is a very important truth, which evinces forcibly, or strongly confirms, the divinity of our religion. It proves satisfactorily, that nearly every tenet which we now believe, and which the protestant denies, were the established doctrines of the christian church, in the fourth and fifth centuries,—the ages which saw these heresies arise. These heresies, it is a fact proved by the authority of the most incontestible vouchers, believe, and always have believed, with the exception of a few speculative tenets, the same doctrines which we do.—However, although the discussion would here be proper, this is a point which I will not elucidate, to-day. I will call your attention to it, when I come to the explanation of the church's apostolicity.

Wherefore, my brethren, without having placed before you all the negative arguments, which prove that catholicity is not the creature of innovation; and without having placed the arguments which I have adduced, in their most striking points of view, I have said, I think, enough to convince you, that the protestant assertions on this question, are the dictate of prejudice, of malevolence, or of ignorance. Catholicity an innovation! And yet, neither the period; nor the occasion; nor the author; nor the means; nor the circumstances; nor the consequences, of the innovation, known! That is the most astonishing of all wonderful revolutions,—if it be a revolution,—and which it was the interest of all to have opposed,—established over the whole christian universe, without noise, notice, murmur, whisper, or observation!!—It is, after having shewn the absurdity of this proposition, which nevertheless is true, if the protestant imputations be correct,—that a multitude of catholic writers, willing to find some kind of shelter for their protestant adversaries, have, out of compassion, invented for them the following ingenious subterfuge. Your wisdom may not, indeed, conceive it very plausible; nor your gravity, perhaps, consider it sufficiently serious for this solemn place. It is not, I allow, either very plausible, or very serious. However, since I think it the best method, by which the protestant can account for the innovations of catholicity;—and since it has the merit of bidding defiance to all assault, I will tell you what



it is. We read in fable, that very singular changes have sometimes suddenly taken place in human things. We read in the descriptions of the poets, that often the most astonishing metamorphoses have, at once, transmuted beings into different objects,---men into monsters,---animals into plants, &c. Wherefore, reasoning from analogy, which is always wise, it is contended, (and why not?) that a similar change might have taken place in the catholic universe. It is possible, the suggesters of this subterfuge have said, that during the deep lethargic slumbers of some gloomy night, when piety, and zeal, and wisdom, were fast asleep,---when all the qualities of the human character were suspended,---its prejudices, its passions, its interests, and its talents,---it is possible, that a sudden metamorphose may have altered the faith of the true believers, and that having retired to rest, at night, in perfect orthodoxy, *they all*, without any consciousness of the awful evil, awoke in the morning, the worshippers of a new religion;---went to bed christians; and arose idolaters! My brethren, however ludicrous may appear this explanation of catholic heterodoxy, yet, it is the best and the most convenient, that the wisdom of protestant ingenuity can adopt, when necessitated to attempt to prove the absurd proposition, that "the catholic is a new religion." I need not, surely, detain you with its refutation.

Here, then, I might with propriety, cease any farther discussion of the question of the *catholicity* of our

establishment, having shewn you, that in it are contained and exhibited all those attributes and features, which constitute the import and signification of that essential characteristic of the true religion;—wide extent of dominion; perpetuity of this wide extent; and perpetuity of belief. However, allow me, before I dismiss the subject, to intrude only a few moments longer on your patience, by calling your attention to one other consideration, which, though of less importance than the arguments which I have been discussing, is still, to good sense and impartiality, a marked attestation of the divinity of our religion. The consideration to which I allude, is briefly this:—that, as it was the design of God, that the true church should be catholic; so it was also his design, that the true church should always be distinguished by the honourable appellation of *catholic*:—as it was the will of Jesus Christ, that the establishment which he formed, should extend through every nation, and subsist through every age, so also it was his will, that this establishment should be dignified by a name corresponding to these great characteristics. “*I believe*,” the apostles commanded the faithful in every age to say, “*in the holy CATHOLIC church*,” “*By this name CATHOLIC*,” says St. Austin, “*I am retained in the catholic church*.” “*My name*,” adds St. Pacian, “*is christian; my surname CATHOLIC: and BY THIS SURNAME, I am distinguished from all the sects of heresy*.” It was by this appellation alone, that several others among the holy fathers asserted the divinity of

the church, and triumphed over the claims of pretended reformations. They, all of them, lay it down as a sure and important rule, that that is the catholic or true church, which is every where called *catholic*;—that a false church—“the synagogue,” they denominate it, “of antichrist”—which is known, or distinguished by any other, name,—by the name, for example, of its author, as Arianism from Arius; Nestorianism from Nestorius, &c. Now, if this rule be true, and it has authority and experience in its favour; it has even criticism and reason to attest its accuracy, (for it is probable that the true church should possess the name of the true church; probable, that the property and the title of the property should go together) but if this rule be true, then is the application of it easy; and the consequence which results from it obvious.—*That is the true church, which is called the catholic church.* And what church is called *catholic*? The reply is simple:—my brethren, ours; and *ours alone*. Even our enemies all call us catholics. They call us catholics in their writings; in their laws; in their conversation:—in the very writings which combat us; in the laws which persecute us; in the conversations which insult us. They call us so, although sensible sometimes of the import of the title, they have occasionally endeavoured to wrest it from us. To wrest it from us, they have always found impossible; “*for*,” as St. Austin says of the heretics of his time, who made also, it appears, the same fruitless effort,—“*whether they will or not, when they name us, or con-*



*verse with strangers, still they call us catholics. The very pagans and infidels point us out by that appellation."* How much evidence, my brethren, and how much security, are contained in one solitary word.

I do not know what may have been the feelings which you have experienced, or what your ideas, whilst I have been placing before you the scenes of the greatness and stability of your divine religion; or whilst I shewed you the absurdity of the imputations, that would fix upon it the crime of innovation. Contemplating the greatness and stability of your religion; and observing, that they corresponded to the assurances and definitions of the greatness and stability of the true church, as they are dictated by the Eternal Wisdom and interpreted by the learned, you experienced, no doubt, the exultation which is the effect, not, I hope, of vanity, but of gratitude to the divine mercy, for your own security. It is certainly, my beloved friends; a very animating circumstance, to view the immensity and the long duration of our church;—to see it stretching out its empire through every climate; consoling by its benefits, and enlightening by its doctrines, the remotest corners of the universe;—to see it existing through the long lapse of so many ages, unmoved, while the strongest empires sink to ruin; and unshaken, while all things fall in decay around it. It is animating to remark it triumphant over all the powers of darkness, and the exertions of human malice; combating often, it is true, with the storms of perse-

cution and the artifices of heresy; yet combating, always, to come off with victory; riding through the tempest, and exalted by the very means which had been levelled at its depression,—verifying, forcibly, the words of my text,—to it “*is dominion, for ever and ever.*” Rejoice in the contemplation of these pleasing scenes.

From their contemplation, too, derive this other consoling assurance, that happen or befall what may, —though the billows of persecution swell, and the tide of error rage,—every effort to destroy the church shall turn out fruitless. The church, these scenes assure you, is an edifice protected by the hand of the Almighty,—a rock, fixed on the basis of the divine power, amid the sea of human life. The billows of persecution shall swell, the tide of error dash against it, in vain. They will no more move it, although they may, indeed, sweep away many of its unguarded members, than the gentlest spray will move the firmest mountain, that the ocean laves. I should be sorry to see the misfortune happen; yet could I behold the most furious tempest gathering, without one feeling of anxiety for the stability of the church. As the Psalmist says, “*it should come to nothing, like the running water.*” (Ps. 57.) It would prove but the preparation for fresh conquests. The security of the church amid storms, during the long interval of eighteen centuries, is alone sufficient assurance of its security, amid the fury of future tempest. Let us, nevertheless,

pray, that no tempest may assail us. Let us pray, too, that being ourselves the members of the true church,—the members of that great family, which flourishing from the time of Christ Jesus to the present day, has contained, and contains, in its bosom so many nations:—let us pray, that we may see associated with us, our beloved, but deluded, brethren, whom the artifices of error have seduced from the paths of truth; that so we may form “one fold, under the guidance of one shepherd;”—and, that forming one fold on earth, we may form also, ere long, one happier fold in heaven.



that no tempter may assail us. Let us pray, too, that being ourselves the members of the true church—the members of that great family, which flourish from the time of Christ's days to the present day, has contained, and contains, in its bosom so many nations:—let us pray, that we may see associated with us, our beloved, but defiled, brethren, whom the artificers of error have seduced from the paths of truth; that so we may form "one fold, under the guidance of one shepherd"—and, that forming one fold on earth, we may form also, ere long, one happy fold in heaven.

## SERMON VI.

### ON THE WANT OF CATHOLICITY IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

*To Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.*

I St. Peter, v. II.

IN the epistle which I read to you, last Sunday, and in the verses just preceding the words of my text, Saint Peter admonishes the faithful to be prudent and vigilant; because, he says, *“your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.”* Such are the malice and vigilance of this enemy of our salvation, and such, also, the sagacity with which he is enabled to give effect to his malice and vigilance, that nothing short of the nicest circumspection, united to a very exalted degree of fortitude, can secure us from his snares. It is a fact, which it would be wise in us to bear constantly in our recollection,—for the recollection would keep our watchfulness awake,—that Satan and the legions of evil spirits who share his punishments, although deprived of those

qualities which are the appendages of grace, are yet possessed of many qualifications, which are greatly superior to the greatest of human talents. They are an order of beings more exalted far, than we are.--- They were angels once, profusely gifted with the choicest blessings, that the divine beneficence could bestow. Of these, unhappily for mankind, they retain those properties, which are the natural appendages of their order,---the intelligence and knowledge; the subtilty and penetration; the activity and vigour:---and all these, they with unceasing industry exert, in order to encompass the ruin of the human race. Indeed, to encompass our ruin,---such is their envy of our happiness,---is their sole employment and ambition. Hence, says St. Peter, "*be prudent and vigilant.*" All the sacred writers inculcate often the same salutary advice, bidding us not only be prudent and vigilant, but moreover, armed strongly against their malice;---"*covered,*" as St. Paul expresses it, "*like the warrior, all over, from head to foot.*" (Eph. vi.)

It is also to inspire us with a strong feeling of the necessity of this prudence, that the scriptures so frequently present to our reason and imaginations, the various artifices and power of these insidious and formidable enemies of our salvation. They exhibit them, like Saint Peter, sometimes, "*as hungry lions seeking to devour us.*"---sometimes, as "*serpents lurking beneath the beauties of a flower;*"---sometimes, even "*as angels of light.*" In short, they represent



them as beings alternately assuming every form, attitude and feature;—giving, by the magic influences of their cunning, to vice the appearance of virtue; and to error the semblance of truth:—flattering our inclinations to corrupt them; gratifying our partialities to seduce them; adding force to the violence of temptation; and fanning to a flame the sparks of irregular desire. Saint Paul describes them by the appellation of “*spirits of wickedness.*” (Eph. vi.)

From the character of beings thus artful and malevolent, and who employ all the resources of their art and malice in seducing creatures so weak as we are, it is easy to form some idea of the misfortunes and evils which they produce:—it is easy to account for the prevalence of vice, and the spread of error. Saint Paul, again, in the epistle to which I have been just alluding, calls them, likewise, “*princes and powers, and rulers of this world of darkness.*” And, unhappily, it is too true that their empire is immense—extending to the farthest boundaries of creation; and comprising under its tyranny, not only the weak and pusillanimous, but the *strong*; not only the ignorant and the foolish, but the *wise*.

It is to illustrate this latter important, but melancholy truth, that the divine wisdom has thought proper, in the sacred scriptures, to present to us one of the most awful pictures, that those holy volumes,—though abounding in frightful descriptions, exhibit. The picture is contained in the thirty-second chapter

of the prophecies of Ezechiel. In it, the prophet represents to us the evil spirit, in the person of the impious prince, Pharao. He represents him surrounded by the victims which he had slain; exulting in the carnage, and consoling himself for his own miseries, by the miseries of those around him. The victims consist, not of the mean, the vulgar and the ignoble; but of kings, princes and heroes. Behold, says the prophet, dreadful scene!—round him are spread the bodies of the dead, whom he has mangled with wounds. There, lies Assur, with his hosts of followers. There, fell Elam and the multitudes that formed his army. There, bleed the leaders, Mosoch and Thubal, the kings of Idumæa and of the North; their princes, and their captains, an innumerable band,—all vanquished, mangled and weltering in their gore. I have already insinuated, who here are depicted under the names of these important victims. They are the men, who, I have said, are often like the weak, the dupes of seduction:—they are the strong and the wise: that is, men, who from the graces which they once possessed; and from the talents with which they had been favoured, ought—and it would seem, might have triumphantly withstood the temptations, to vice, or the allurements to error. But alas! so it is:—casting a look upon the theatre of life, or consulting the annals of religion, while we find, that the victims to the artifices of Satan are still, and have been always, innumerable,—we find also, that among these victims, there are still, and always have

been, men of distinguished and exalted characters,—men frequently, who have been reared in the sanctuaries of virtue, and in the temples of wisdom,—Assur, and Elam, and Mosoch, and Thubal.

These reflections, though perhaps too long for the introduction to a discourse, are not, however, unconnected with that which I am proceeding to address to you to day. They teach you not to wonder at the triumphs of vice, nor at the victories of error:—not to be astonished, or shaken in the firmness of your faith, if you remark, that sometimes the virtuous themselves, and the enlightened,—or, at least, the apparently virtuous and enlightened,—are the victims of illusion and the dupes of heresy.

It is, indeed, possible, that one difficulty may have suggested itself to your imaginations, from the descriptions which I have given you of the power of the evil spirits, and of the extent of their dominion. “How,—you perhaps said to yourselves, whilst I made those descriptions,—“if the power of these beings be so great, and the extent of their dominion so wide, how reconcile these with the pompous descriptions, which in my last discourse, I presented, of the grandeur of the empire of the christian church?” This you all remember, was delineated before you, reposing upon the ruins of vice and error; and stretching through all the various religions of the globe. “Surely,”—you concluded,—“the two portraits are at variance; and the co-existence of two such empires can hardly be



reconciled together." My brethren, it is from the very circumstances of the power of these malignant spirits, and from the wide extent of their influence, that is precisely deduced the strongest attestation of the divinity of the church. For if, notwithstanding their power and influence; if, notwithstanding their unabating industry, and all the exertions of their malice to corrupt the morals, and to vitiate the faith of the true believers; if, notwithstanding all this, the church still flourishes, and has always flourished, strong in piety and firm in truth, what proof can be more palpable, than that therefore she is divine; and that the being who protects her, is more powerful than the enemies who assail her? Certainly, a mere human institution could not withstand,—much less for eighteen hundred years have withstood,—the fury of such assailants. The subsistence of the empire of Satan among mankind, is no proof that the empire of the church is not divine; but, the subsistence of the church amid the empire of Satan, is the proof that the arm which guards this great establishment, is *Omnipotent*. That which "the gates of hell cannot prevail against," we are instructed by the eternal wisdom to consider as the work of the Almighty.

From these reflections, my brethren, and still more from those, which I suggested to you in my last discourse, you understand what constitutes the attestation of the divinity of the church, in relation to its great feature and characteristic,—*Catholicity*. After hav-

ing considered this attestation well; seen it applied to the religion which you and I adore; and finding that it accords with this religion,—it should almost appear superfluous to lengthen the discussion, and make its application to any other institutions of society. The evidence that it accords with *one* religion, is the evidence that it cannot accord with any other. There cannot co-exist two catholic religions. However,—absurd as is the pretension,—it is a fact, that the multifarious religions of protestantism,—all and each of them exclusively,—do confidently boast that they are *divine*; and consequently, nearly all and each of them exclusively, with equal confidence, boast that they are *catholic*. Since, therefore, such are the pretensions of these religions, it is again necessary for me, (as my plan is to form parallels,) to discuss their claims to the assumed characteristic; in order that seeing them, you may be enabled to judge of their respective merits; and that seeing them placed by the side of the claims of *our* great establishment; you may with accuracy determine, to which they best, and in reality, belong,—you may, without danger or difficulty, decide, where is the church of Christ,—where the synagogue, of error.

I. We have then, my brethren, in this discourse to ascertain, whether, in any of the different religions of protestantism, there exist that essential appendage and mark of the church of Christ,—*Catholicity*. Useless as it may be to recal to your recollection, what is im-

plied by this important term, (you have heard that defined already) yet, for the sake of perspicuity, I will just remind you of it. Reasoning is dependant, almost entirely, on definition; and the accuracy of each deduction consists in its agreement with the definition which preceded it. As defined then, by the protestant themselves, catholicity signifies *universality*;—and universality, as it is again explained by them, implies, when understood of the church, that “*the true church should be universal, in its diffusiveness; and perpetual in its duration;*” that is, spread widely through the various nations of the universe; and subsisting through each age, since the era of its institution. There is hardly a protestant theologian, who does not thus define the church’s catholicity; making the greatness and perpetuity of its dominion, the grand characters of its divinity,—according to the words of my text, to it “*be dominion, for ever and ever.*”

By the catholicity of the church, I have said, is understood, in the first place, its wide diffusion through the various nations of the universe. And does the protestant church present to us the evidence of a diffusion of this description? My brethren, before I return an answer to this question, let me rectify your ideas. By the protestant church, or protestantism, you are, by no means, to figure to yourselves the idea of one religion, or of one peculiar system of belief. It is true, that if whatever is called protestant, were of the same religion,—since the name is very widely diffused,—



so also, it might justly be contended, is the religion. But, the truth is, that the name *protestant*, or the word protestantism, is not expressive of any peculiar portion of believers, nor indicative of any distinctive tenets of belief. The terms are terms of disbelief, rather than of any belief whatever;—expressions of disunity, rather than of unity. In short, they have nothing, or nearly nothing, to do with religion at all. They are political terms; being adopted by the first reformers, to express their disapprobation of an instrument that was proposed to them by the policy of Charles the fifth. Under the appellation of protestant, there have existed and still exist,—you discover, if you consult the annals of the reformation,—above two hundred distinct religions; religions as different, in some instances, from each other, as they are from the parent church;—religions, which condemn, excommunicate and anathematise each other;—which retain not a single solitary maxim of mutual unity, except the marked aversion, which they all and each entertain for the venerable institute, which they have all abandoned. Sorry I am to say it, but this unhallowed link of unity they do all of them retain. Even their mutual animosity, which, in their contests with each other, burns often with the fiercest indignation,—in their contests with us, not only melts away and is forgotten, but is changed into mutual friendship. They verify exactly the observation which Tertullion made in his time—and which has been always, and will be always verified till the end of time,

that "*the sole principle of unity among heretics, is the hatred of catholicity.*"

The method, therefore, to be pursued in the investigation which I am making, is this:—since the true church, like truth, is essentially *one*; because, like truth, it is divine; and, since this *one* church is essentially *catholic*,—it is consequently necessary, in order to ascertain the title of any establishment to the prerogative of being the true church, to consider its claims distinctly and separately; and to measure whether thus distinctly and separately considered, there be in its diffusion a sufficient extent of empire to realise the import, and to fulfil the characteristic of *universality*. Whoever admits the unity of the church of Christ, or whoever admits, as Bishop Horne expresses it, that the church is not "*an indigested heap of contrarieties, jumbled together into the same mass—a mere chaos,*" must admit these inferences. Once again, therefore, the consequence is, that to ascertain the title of protestantism to the prerogative of being the true church, or to the characteristic of catholicity,—the method is, to consider separately the claims of *each* of its various institutions. If even it were true, that the true church does subsist within the pale of protestantism, yet it is also plainly true, that it can subsist *in one only* of its societies.

To measure the claims of each of the numberless sects of protestantism to the title of catholicity, would be, if not impossible, certainly needless. Among them

there are many whose diffusion—if the words be not here preposterous—does not exceed the limits, sometimes of a province;—sometimes of a town; sometimes, as I have said elsewhere, of the nook which gave them birth. To discuss the claims of such societies to catholicity, would be absurd. Passing therefore over these, let us consider such only as are most extended; and whose claims, if any, are most prominent and imposing. For example, let us consider, in the first place, the religious institution of this country, as it is established by its laws;—an institution carressed by its adherents as catholic, and venerated as divine. The religious institution of this country, I need not repeat it, is a religion by itself; distinct in its tenets and discipline, and different in its features from every other religion of protestantism. “*Our articles*,” says the present bishop of Lincoln, (Dr. Tomline)---“*our articles and liturgy do not correspond with the sentiments of any of the eminent reformers on the continent; or with the creeds of any of the protestant churches, which are there established.*” (Charge an. 1803.) Consequently, the established religion of this nation is the religion of this nation alone. Now, my brethren, let me ask your good sense; let me ask the good sense of any protestant, whether it appear wise and consistent, to consider the religion of a single nation,---the religion of a small island,---the religion of a little corner of the universe, and of a mere handful of men,---to consider it a catholic religion? How ill does such notions accord



with the magnificent descriptions which the scriptures furnish of the church's greatness! Is such, "*the mountain exalted above the top of the mountains, into which all nations flow;*" (Is.)---"*the mountain filling the whole earth;*" (Dan.)---"*the mountain of holiness, the joy of the universe;*" (Ps.)---"*the dominion reaching from sea to sea?*" (Ps.) How ill even, does such notions accord with the definitions which the protestants themselves have given of catholicity! How ill, with the plain import of the term! The religion of an island, *catholic!* There is something preposterous quite, in the idea. It demands all the blindness of partiality to entertain it. To my notions of accuracy and consistency, there would be just as much wisdom to call England the *universe*, as to call its religion *catholic*;---for *catholic* is synonymous to *universal*.

But, perhaps, it may be contended, that the religion of this country extends far beyond its shores; and that stretching, like its empire, its arms to distant colonies, it exhibits also, like it, the proud spectacle of something stupendously great, and triumphantly diffused. My brethren, this assertion, is made, (and I regret the misfortune, were it only for the sake of humanity) but this assertion, if made, can be only made by those who are ignorant of the state of our colonies. Although, indeed, it be very true, that it should seem easy to transport, and plant the religion of the nation in those prolific sources of its prosperity; and in exchange for the toils, and sweats, and riches, of their

inhabitants, bequeath to them the glad tidings of their redemption, and the means to apply its fruits to their eternal happiness,—yet is it also true, and it is a melancholy truth, that our countrymen have transported and planted little there, but the vices and corruptions of Europe;—neither religion, nor piety, nor learning. This misfortune is lamented by several of our writers; and it is acknowledged by nearly all who have spoken on the subject. The late Dr. Porteus weeps over it pathetically, in one of the best of his discourses. He there owns, speaking of our West India islands, that “*the religion of the slaves (they were then slaves,) is totally neglected;*” and that “*they are left in the same state of ignorance and infidelity, which they had brought with them from the wilds of Africa.*” “*They are even allowed,*” says the History of Jamaica, “*the unlimited indulgence of every vice.*” The case is similar, throughout the whole extent of our widely extended colonies and possessions. You seek in vain for a single nation, on the minds of whose pagan inhabitants the zeal of our established clergy has poured the ray of revelation. Alas! do you not seek in vain for the solitary cabin? Much, I fear, that hardly is there the solitary cabin, where virtue smiles that is enlightened by christianity; or in which resides the happy individual, who exults in the prospects of future comforts, endeared to him by the benefits of the gospel.\* What-

\* Major Scott Waring asserts, that, in India, a few converts have been made to christianity. However, he also owns, that their num-

ever be the industry of our established clergy, to infuse their principles into the minds of their catholic brethren at home,---to infuse them into the minds of their pagan brethren abroad, has never yet appeared to be an object, that has merited their attention.†---

ber is extremely small. "*Under the Bengal government,*" he says, "*there are from thirty to forty millions of inhabitants; and, in thirteen years, about eighty converts to christianity have been made: eight or nine of whom,*" he adds, "*have been dismissed for immorality!*" Remarks on sermons preached before the University of Oxford.

†The remark of Tertullian, respecting the reformers and heretics of his own age, may be very justly applied to the reformers and heretics of every other period. "*Their solicitude,*" he says, "*is not to convert the pagan, but to pervert the catholic; their glory, not to raise the prostrate, but to throw down those who stand.*" The remark is correct, if applied to our protestant brethren, in reference to us.

It is true, that a few attempts have been made by our protestant brethren to convert the pagan. Thus, Calvin and the church of Geneva, sent Richerus, a man extolled by Beza, for his "*tried virtue and distinguished learning,*" to some of the infidel regions of America. We have the account of the mission from Richerus him, self, from Nicolai, and from Villegagnon, the captain of the vessel, which conducted the missionaries. Suffice it to say, that they all allow, that the exertions of their zeal were completely fruitless. In like manner, the French protestants sent missionaries into the Brazils, whence, after having committed the most inhuman cruelties on the catholics, they were reduced to retire, without having left one principle of protestantism behind them. Similar attempts, attended by similar success, were made by our own countrymen, under the conduct of Sir Martin Forbisher. So that Beza, after



So that in our pagan possessions, not only is there not any protestant church of the legal establishment, composed of the proselytes from paganism; but their prevails in them nearly the same infidelity, which our first colonists found in those seats of ignorance. The consequence therefore is, as I have just remarked, that the protestant church of this nation consists of little, or nothing else, but Englishmen. And if these compose an universal church, then it is true, as I have likewise remarked, that the universal church consists of the subjects of a single nation! But, I even say too much:—for it is by no means true, that all Englishmen, or yet the greater part of Englishmen, are the members of the established church. The far greater part of Englishmen are not its members. So that, in reality,

witnessing the inutility of every protestant attempt to convert the pagans, and lamenting the misfortune, reluctantly declares,—that *“having enough at home, to engage their industry, it is better for the protestants to resign the conversion of the infidel nations to the Jesuits.”* (A compliment, which that illustrious body very justly merited.)

It may be supposed, that at present, the zeal of the protestant missionaries in our pagan settlements, is more successful than that of their predecessors. Possibly, such may be the case. However, it is likewise true, that their successes are extremely trifling. But, here is a fact, which it is important in this place to notice,—that the missionaries, whom either our protestant brethren have hired, or who have spontaneously gone, to preach the gospel in our pagan settlements, are not the members of the *established* church. They are, in general, Moravians, and a small portion of Methodists.

if the legal establishment of this nation constitute the universal church, then does the universal church consist of a mere handful of individuals;—of a small portion of a small community of a small island! Surely, you feel the absurdity of such pretensions.

Another distinct religion subsisting under the general denomination of protestants, is the *Lutheran*.—The Lutheran religion is, perhaps, more widely diffused, or at least, its members, are, perhaps, more numerous, than those of the legal establishment of this country. As it was the first introduced of the new religions, and introduced by some of the best defenders of the reformation,—by getting the start of the innovations, which so rapidly succeeded it, it soon acquired and has always retained an ascendancy, which no other system of protestanism has yet been able to obtain. And still, what is the diffusion of this most extensive; or most prevalent of all the various systems of protestanism? Why, giving it its greatest diffusion and prevalence; supposing, that all are Lutherans, who retain the name of Lutherans; and that all Lutherans are of one religion,\*—suppositions these, which are by no means founded on facts,—still are its diffusion and prevalence inconsiderable. It is the established religion of two of the northern kingdoms, Sweden and Denmark,—kingdoms, whose population, when compared to most of the European kingdoms, is

\* There have been enumerated upwards of thirty Lutheran religions.

trifling:—of a few provinces in Germany, which yet are not entirely Lutheran; and of a few once independent cities. This is nearly the extent of the empire of Lutheranism. If elsewhere, it have any believers, they are a few almost unnoticed individuals, concealed nearly, in a few of the great trading towns in the north of Europe. This is one of the observations made by the Centuriators, not only respecting the religion of Luther, but respecting protestantism, in general;—that *it gained proselytes only in the north; and that it seemed to be driven into exile there (ibi velut in exilium pelli.\*)* In reality, it has no establishment in any of the greater kingdoms of the universe;—not in France; nor Spain; nor Italy; nor Russia; nor Turkey; nor England; nor ——. It is unknown in Asia and in Africa. In America, with the exception of a few colonies within the limits of the United States, it has not a vestige of existence. So that, if the true church be necessarily catholic; and catholic signify an expanse of empire reaching throughout the universe,—then it is evident, that the religion of Luther, like that of the

\* Whoever has traced the history of the growth of protestanism has remarked, that its progress was most rapid in the north; and that it was every where accelerated, in proportion to the measure of the ignorance of the people to whom it was proposed. Thus, in Sweden, Denmark, Norway,—nations which were then almost immersed in barbarism,—it was received with comparatively small opposition; whilst in the kingdoms that were enlightened by the rays of science,—France, Italy, Spain, &c.—it was either violently combatted, or treated with contempt.



thirty-nine articles, has no claim to that sacred title. Its diffusion is relatively small; its professors, comparatively few.

Another of the protestant religions, and the next in point of importance, to those which I have named is that of Calvin. Calvinism, after Lutheranism and the legal establishment of this country, has a greater extent of dominion than any other system of the reformation. However, when I say this, I equivalently declare myself excused from discussing its claims to catholicity. For, if its claims be less than those of Lutheranism, and of our legal establishment,—and even these be too little to give them that great prerogative, —therefore, can Calvinism have no title to its assumption. In truth, although many of the maxims of Calvin may have a multitude of admirers, wherever the doctrines of the reformation grow,—yet, has Calvinism itself, or the real religion of Calvin (and it is thus, that in my present discussion, I am bound to view it,) a very contracted empire. Considered in this point of view, it is, at most, the religion of a few provinces, of a few cities, and scattered villages. It has scarcely a worshipper in two of the great divisions of the globe. It is unknown in America, save in certain districts of the United Provinces. In Europe, it has no large establishment in any of the larger kingdoms. Nor has it any establishment in any kingdom, except in those, —and those are few, —where at the era of the reformation, by the help of violence and the aid of arms,

triumphing over the forbearance of the laws, it forced itself into power. But, to call or consider such a religion, catholic, in the acceptation which we affixed to this term, is as palpable a solecism, as it is possible, almost, for ignorance to commit.

In the delineation which I have made, of the extent of the three most extended religions of protestantism, I have seemed to suppose, that in each of these religions, the faith of its respective professors is similar, and that all admit one uniform code of doctrines. I have seemed to suppose, that the professors of the thirty-nine articles do really believe the thirty-nine articles;—the Lutherans, the tenets of Luther;—the Calvinists, the opinions of Calvin. Unity, such as this, although it would not suffice to establish a claim to catholicity, would yet prove, that the multitude of the adherents to each of these religions is considerable.—Indeed, the nominal adherents to each of these religions are considerable. However,—and let me remark, that this circumstance is extremely important,—the nominal adherents to each of these religions, are not, in general, the believers of the religions which they profess. They are, in general, nominal believers only. Among them, there exist the greatest difference of opinion and latitude of belief;—a latitude frequently wide as that which exists between the ideas, the prejudices, the partialities, and the talents, of the different individuals who compose them.\* Thus, in this coun-

\* *“The doctrine of the protestant church,” says Gibbon, “is now, far removed from the knowledge and belief of its members:*

try, among the professors of the thirty-nine articles, and even among those who have solemnly subscribed them, there prevails the greatest variety of sentiment, and confusion of interpretation. "*The articles of our established church,*" says Mason Good, in the words which I have cited already,—"are differently interpreted by many even of the right reverend bench itself, from what they were formerly; and it seems doubtful, from modern controversies, whether their basis be chiefly Arminian, or Calvinistic,"\* But, Nightingale, noticing the various shades of error, and the confusion of principles, which mark the faith of our established clergy, says of them more correctly, and yet more pointedly, than Mason Good:—"Here, we have Calvinian, Arminian, Unitarian, Swedenburgian, Pelagian, Arian, Socinian, Sabellian, Trinitarian, and I do not know how many other sorts of clergymen, in our church,—all retained by her,—living upon her revenues, and protected by her laws.† To whoever is acquainted with the writings and discourses of our

and the articles of their faith are subscribed by the clergy, with a sigh, or a smile." "Hence," the philosopher infers, "the predictions of the catholics are accomplished. The numbers of the Arminians, Arians, and Socinians, must not be computed from their separate congregations: and the pillars of revelation are shaken by men, who preserve the NAME without the SUBSTANCE of religion; and indulge the LICENCE, without the TEMPER of philosophy."—Chap. 45.

\* Life of Geddes.

† Portrait of Methodism.



established clergy;—and still more, to whoever is extensively acquainted with their private opinions, the above assertions of Mason Good and of Nightingale, will not appear incorrect. In the writings and discourses of our clergy, there is all the difference of opinion which these writers attribute to them. Consulting them on the signification of the thirty-nine articles, you seek in vain for two who interpret them alike. In their private opinions, they indulge a freedom of belief,---the thing is very natural,--- beyond what they deem it prudent to express in public. For my own part, I do seriously think, that in the whole body of our protestant clergy, there are not six individuals, who, I do not say, believe all their articles in the same sense; but, who believe them at all. I have even too high an opinion of their good sense to conceive it possible.

To account, either for the disbelief, or for the variety of belief, which prevails among the members of the establishment, in relation to their code of faith, is extremely easy. It is easy to do it, without appealing to the great principle of protestantism,---“that reason is the sole judge of faith, and the arbiter of belief.” By this principle, since reason every where varies, so also, if men will judge, their opinions must vary equally.--- But, independently of this principle, the causes of the incredulity, and variety of interpretation, of the thirty-nine articles, are obviously natural. “*These articles,*” says Dr. Paley, “*contain many hundred controverted*

*propositions.*" This circumstance alone, accounts for the incredulity, and the variety of interpretation. It cannot be imagined, where there is question of "*many hundred controverted propositions,*" that multitudes will not reject some of them as false; while multitudes must interpret them differently. And then, what is the nature of these propositions? Why, says another great protestant divine, the distinguished Dr. Balguy, —"*they are some of them ambiguous and incorrect; some of them containing unphilosophical things, which may draw men into error.*" There is hardly a protestant now so partial, but has the good sense to feel, and the candor to own all this;—to acknowledge, that the thirty-nine articles are a confused, obscure, and very imperfect instrument of belief. Combine these circumstances together, and you have, at once, the plainest demonstration, not only of the facility, but of the necessity of that confusion, which exists in our establishment, on the subject of its creed. Unhappy and fatal consequences, my brethren, of what fashion is pleased to denominate "*emancipation from tyranny!*" Loosed from the sacred anchor of authority, men, you observe, even the learned and the wise, float around you on the vast ocean of error;—tossed about, the sport of doubt;—the victims, sometimes of incredulity;—the dupes, oftentimes of fanaticism. I regret these evils sincerely; and sincerely do I lament the cause—the imperfection of the creed which gives them birth. It is this imperfection, which, in our days, is doing in-



calculable mischiefs to the establishment itself; and undermining the fabric which it was intended to support. It is crowding the schools of Socinianism with the learned; and filling the conventicles of Methodism with the ignorant. The learned despise a creed which is manifestly incorrect. The ignorant disregard what the learned despise:—only, being fortunately too timid to live without the forms of worship, they sink into fanaticism. Thus, like a mere sand bank, the establishment of this nation is washing rapidly away:—and, much I fear, that the torrents of Socinianism united to the tide of Methodism, will, in the course of of a few years, have left nothing of its greatness but the name. If men will err, much rather would I see them err in the national church, than become the playthings of other novelties. The national church, among the protestant establishments, “*is perhaps,*” as Dryden has remarked, “*the least DEFORMED, because the least reformed,*”

It is with Lutheranism, as it is with the religion of the thirty-nine articles. It is not now a real, but a nominal thing. The members of the Lutheran community, like the members of all the ancient sects of the reformation, have divided themselves into a variety of religions,—retaining, out of veneration for the man, the name of Lutherans; yet, very inconsistently with that veneration, retaining few of the great patriarch’s tenets. Mosheim, himself professedly a Lutheran, says of the Lutherans, that in general they believe



just what they please; and consequently disbelieve what their forefathers had been wont to venerate.---  
*"They take,"* he says, *"the most unbounded liberty of dissenting from the symbolic books, which formerly were considered by them, as an almost infallible rule of belief and practice. . . . Towards the end of the seventeenth century, they adopted the leading maxim of the Arminians,--that christians are accountable to God alone for their religious sentiments. Whence,"* he remarks, *"there has originated among them the most unbridled licentiousness, which holds nothing sacred."* (Cent. 17.) I have noticed it already, more than once, that in the great community named Lutheran, the learned have enumerated upwards of thirty distinct religions; and among these, if learning will further investigate the question, it will find that there is not one which believes the original religion, that was believed and organised by Luther.\* Hardly does there remain a wreck of the parent community of the great reformer.

Similar to the above, is the revolution which has taken place in Calvinism. Calvinism comprises now a countless variety of sects,--the *re-reformations* of the reformation of Calvin. Of the original doctrines

\* It is, indeed, difficult to say, what was the real religion of Luther. Like his followers, he was often changing his opinions. He sometimes, for example, admitted seven sacraments; sometimes only one;--then two;--then three. Divine have enumerated thirty-six different opinions of this apostle, on the subject of the eucharist. They are noticed by the divines of Zurich.

of this apostle, these sects, it is true,---perhaps all of them,---retain a few with profound respect: but they have discarded many; and ingrafted a variety of new tenets upon his ancient principles. So that the number of Calvinists, really professing the religion of Calvin, is extremely small. *“Even the city of Geneva,”* says Mosheim,---and the fact is much more notorious at the present epoch,---*“even the city of Geneva, has not only adopted feelings of esteem for the Arminians; but is become itself so far Arminian, as to deserve a place among the churches of that communion.”* (Cent. 17.) This is saying, that the Calvinists have departed, as far almost as it is possible, from the doctrines and maxims of their founder. Mosheim makes the same, or similar observations, on the other churches of this religion. *“In France,”* he says, and he speaks of a period, when Calvinism was most flourishing,---*“in France, while the reformed churches still subsisted, its doctors had departed, in several points, from the common rule of faith, which was received in the other churches of their communion.”* (Cent. 17.) It is the property of error to fluctuate;---and the property of things which fluctuate, to be always changing. Hence, if at an early period of the Calvinistic heresy, the departure of its members from their principles was so great, think, what must be the distance of their aberrations from them in the present age, when liberty of opinion has acquired a dominion unknown to preceding generations; and when licen-

tiousness tramples upon every thing, that passion deems unwise? Of course, the believers in the parent institute of Calvinism must be few.

It is not necessary, that I should shew you, that in all the other numberless religions of protestantism, the departure of their members from the first tenets of their founders, has been similar to that which I have been citing. If in the best organised of these societies, such effect have occurred, doubtlessly it would take place in others. "*Miserable wretches,*" say the Centuriators, speaking of multitudes of the early reformers, "*to-day approving, what to-morrow they reject: and calling heresy now, what just before they had maintained was the truth!*" In fact, all the systems of protestantism have been always, and for ever will be, whilst protestantism subsists, in a state of perpetual fluctuation;—a succession of heresy succeeding and replacing heresy, like wave succeeding and absorbing wave;—or else, in order to allow them a greater degree of stability,—like sand-beds formed by one flood, and washed away by another.

Painful as may be this instability of protestantism, to the protestant who feels that instability is not the appendage of the truth,—yet is there nothing in it, he must admit, if he weigh its causes, that can excite his wonder. The evidence, that it must exist, under the operation of such causes, is, if possible, plainer than that it *does* exist. It is the *necessary* effect of the leading principles of protestantism. This, indeed, is a



truth which I have before demonstrated to you, in my discourse on the Church's Unity; and which, therefore, I will not dwell on now. Let me only, in order again to make it sensible, just recal to your recollection, what the leading principles of protestanism are. They are these:—that, *each individual is the judge of faith*;—that, *his own opinion is the sole rule of his belief*; that, *all authority in faith is tyranny*:—or, to use the elegant and correct definition of Dr. Watson,—“*protestantism consists in believing what each one pleases; and in professing what he believes.*” My brethren, these maxims alone are the plain elucidation of all that I have been establishing. With them, unity of belief, and whatever is the effect of consistency and stability, is clearly incompatible. Where men are allowed to judge for themselves; and where, to be consistent, they are *obliged* to judge for themselves, it is impossible, since judgments vary, that men should judge alike. As for the creeds, and articles, and confessions of faith, which the protestant establishments endeavour, every where, to force upon the credulity of the protestant public, these, you have observed, the protestant public every where neglect; either because they are unwilling to resign their liberty, or because they consider it the first duty of their religion, to follow the first principles of their religion. In reality, creeds, articles, and confessions of faith, are the violations of the first principles of protestantism, and the sacrifice of protestant theology to protestant policy.—

The consequence therefore is, that the claims of the protestant churches to the title of *Catholicity*, whether they be sought in the diffusion of these churches, or in the unity of these churches, are vain, nugatory, and groundless. The diffusion of each church is trifling; unity, in each church, there is none.

But, behold, here occurs one of those artful expedients, one of those useful shifts, to which the protestant has recourse, who, too blind to see the truth, or too obstinate to embrace it, is determined to continue the advocate of error. That catholicity is a characteristic of the true religion, is a point which the good sense of the protestant admits; but an object, I have shewn you, to which the protestant religions have no claim, from the most natural methods of interpreting this characteristic. How, then, do the advocates of these religions reason? "Why," they say, "it is true, that our religions considered, individually, are none of them so widely diffused, as to merit the name of catholic; neither is the creed of any one of these religions so uniformly believed, that it can with accuracy be regarded as an universal creed:—but, at least, our religions, taken collectively, are very widely extended, and they all, or nearly all, (this is the subterfuge,) profess the same great, important, and *fundamental* articles of revelation. It is the general belief of these *fundamental articles*, that constitutes the tie, which unites us all together;—that forms us into a church sufficiently considerable to deserve the title of catho-

lic." This, my brethren, is the most specious argument, by which the protestant,---imposing on his own credulity,---defends his imaginary claims. You may find it in the writings of a multitude of protestant theologians; and you may hear it daily supported in your intercourse with your protestant acquaintance.---  
*"Those,"* says Mosheim, *"who profess the main truths of the christian religion; and take care to avoid too great intimacy with the tenets of the Socinians, and of the papists, are considered WORTHY MEMBERS of the protestant church. And hence, in our times, this extensive community comprehends in its bosom, Arminians, Calvinists, Supralapsarians, Sublapsarians, Universalists, &c."* (Cent. 18.) Alas! how blind is error; and on what illusive reasonings, do men risk the prospects of their future happiness!

I have, indeed, you may remember, exposed the fallacy and weakness of the system of *fundamentals*, (this is the name which is given to the supposed articles) in one of my preceding sermons.\* Let me refer you to what I said, on that occasion,---only remarking here, that there is nothing in the sacred scriptures to authorise the system of *fundamentals*;---nothing in the venerable rolls of ancient precedent to sanction it;---nothing in the nature of religious faith to recommend it;---nothing in reason itself to attest its wisdom. The sacred scriptures, without any discrimination of arti-

\* Vol. I, p. 56, &c.



cles of belief, declare unequivocally, that "*whoever shall not believe, shall be condemned*:---the rolls of precedent demonstrate, that the ancient fathers considered every deviation from any established doctrine of the church, as a crime deserving of eternal punishments:---the nature of religious faith implies an entire assent to all the dictates of the divine veracity:---and reason itself suggests, that nothing can be safely disbelieved, which the eternal wisdom has revealed. Indeed, where is the need of so many revealed truths, if the belief of one or two articles suffice to insure salvation? Or, why propose them with such dreadful comminations, if men be at liberty to disbelieve them? But, what a law is that which men may interpret as they please;---from which caprice may select what is consonant to its partiality; and partiality mutilate, as passion or ignorance may impel? This is reducing religion to a mere system of human philosophy at best: and it is rendering the voice of God more feeble, than is the dictate, frequently, of a puny earthly legislator.

But, let me also ask the protestant, why, if the belief of one or two fundamental articles, be sufficient to give salvation, and to unite all the sects of the reformation into one religion, why then do the protestant establishments mutually condemn, excommunicate and anathematise each other,---declaring each other accursed,---while they all, or nearly all, believe the few doctrines which are sometimes deemed fundamental? Thus, the Lutheran excommunicates the Calvinist;

and the Calvinist the Lutheran. The Anglican anathematises the Anabaptist; the Anabaptist the Anglican. In short, each sect of protestantism condemns and declares heretical,---and therefore accursed,---the sect whose doctrines are at variance with its own. Whence this severity, if the belief of one or two articles of revelation suffice to render men the members of the church of Christ? If such belief do suffice, it is manifestly worse than horrible in the protestant churches, to have reprobated each other, as they have done. It is unjust, uncharitable, inconsistent.

But here occurs the material point, which on this important question, it is almost our sole object to ascertain. Are the various sects of protestanism united in their sentiments and belief, respecting what they have denominated fundamentals? If they be not united, then does their claim to catholicity, through the medium of these imaginary articles,---and which also is their most specious claim,---vanish. Well, singular as it may seem to some of you, yet, it is true, that even upon this vitally important, but apparently easy subject, they are not united. They are, in truth, greatly disunited: and its defenders have fallen,---its most able defenders have fallen,---in supporting the illusive system,---into the grossest absurdities, contradictions and impieties. I did, in a former discourse, present you with a superficial sketch of a few only of their various opinions. Luther, for example, makes the whole code of fundamental truths consist in the belief, "that Christ was crucified; and that the

pope is Antichrist;—an absurdity, which had several other absurd, though learned advocates, to support it, besides the arch-apostle. Polanus, Perkins, Mullenger, Musculus, extend the fundamental articles to the apostles creed;—whilst Beza, Melancthon, Whitaker, Ursinus, very awkwardly, make them include the decalogue. Eilbract, in the lives of the reformers, tell us, that some of these exalted individuals, with extreme good nature, stinted the medium of salvation to the belief of the solitary article of justification;—just, as with similar liberality, the indulgent Capel confined it to the piety “of not cursing our great Redeemer!” It is, too, among the establishments of protestantism, as it is among its members;—they all, like the latter, differ in their opinions of fundamentals. What one establishment deems fundamental, another considers unimportant;—what here is revered as necessary, is there derided as absurd. It is so, in the Lutheran, Calvinian, Anglican, Anabaptistic, and other heresies. There is, in each of these, a peculiar set of tenets revered by its professors, as fundamental truths; and rejected by its adversaries, as fundamental errors. These tenets are what distinguish each establishment; their belief is orthodoxy; their disbelief heresy;—their belief, the band which ties its members into one;—their disbelief, the source of those dreadful curses and excommunications, which the protestant establishments, so profusely teem upon each other.



From the dissonance and absurdity of the various codes of fundamentals, many conclusions might be deduced. The Socinians,—the best reasoning sect of protestants, although perhaps the most profane, have deduced some obvious conclusions from them. They have proved from them, that a system which is pregnant with so much contradiction and folly, could never, in the designs of the Eternal Wisdom, have been destined to be the medium of salvation, and the basis of christian hope:—they have shewn, that it is repugnant to the leading maxims of protestantism, which constitutes every individual the arbiter of his own belief,---a maxim by which consequently nothing is fundamental, but what each individual is pleased to consider fundamental. Or else, they have said,---reasoning still philosophically,---if there be such things as fundamental articles, there can, by the rule of protestantism, be no other fundamental articles, but these,---“*universal liberty, and universal toleration.*” And, my brethren, evident it is, that the reasoning of the Socinians is correct. A system which generates confusion, is not in the plan of the divine economy, a rule of faith:—and a system, which violates the first maxims of protestantism, is not the system which the protestant should defend. However, the conclusion, which it is mine to deduce from it on this occasion, is merely this:—the defenders of fundamentals do not agree among themselves, respecting the articles which they are pleased to denominate fundamental; consequently, there is no

unity of belief resulting from this favourite system:---there is no unity of belief, consequently, there is no catholicity of belief:---and consequently again, the claim, which the ingenuity of protestantism has invented to the title of the catholic church, through the medium of *fundamentals*, is empty and illusive. I think that no wise logician will contest the evidence of these conclusions.

But, having thus discussed the claims of protestantism, as they are founded on the extent and diffusion of its various religions, let us proceed to examine them, under the head of their duration and stability,—the second feature which enters into the formation of the characteristic of *catholicity*.

II. I have already shewn you, and therefore it is needless perhaps to repeat it, that according to the definition of catholicity, as even it is given by protestant theologians,---it is necessary that the true church, besides being diffused through every nation, should likewise have existed through the lapse of every age, since the period of its introduction.—“*The true church*,” says Dr. Tomline, “*was designed to be not only universal, but perpetual.*” Or, as Archbishop Wake expresses it,---“*we believe, that in all ages, to the end of the world, Christ shall continue to have a church upon earth: so that no power of men, or malice of the devil, shall ever be able to root it out, or destroy it.*”\* “*We hold*,” says Hooker, “*that God’s clergy are*

\* The Principles of the Christian Religion.

*a state, which hath been and will be for ever.*"\* The language of the generality of protestant writers, from Luther down to Dr. Tomline, is similar to the above. They nearly all admit, that *the true church is the church of every age*. My brethern, these premises are extremely clear and easy. They are so clear and easy, that it should seem singular, that any, but one and the same deduction should have been, or could be, borrowed from them. The true church, it is allowed, must have existed always, from the age of the apostles down to the present day:—therefore, if the protestant church be the true church, it must consequently have existed during this length of interval. There is no sophistry in this reasoning. The conclusion is the obvious result of a maxim that is admitted.

*The true church has existed always, from the age of the apostles, down to the present day.* And, has the protestant church existed always, from the age of the apostles, down to the present day? If it have, then indeed, may it lay claim to the characteristic of being divine. If it have not, then it is merely a human institution. The protestant church existed from the age of the apostles, down to the present day!—that is during the long interval of above eighteen hundred years. Why, at the serious repetition of such a proposition, your good sense shrinks back with wonder. You feel at once that it is ridiculous. You would pity the

\* Eccl. Pol.



credulity that could believe; or laugh at the ignorance, that could assert it. The protestant church existed eighteen hundred years! Alas! my brethren, without any misgivings of diffidence; without any apprehension of reproach for prejudging the question,—I answer, —No. No, the protestant church has not existed during this length of interval. I am speaking, here, on a question, whose every point it is easy to ascertain. We know exactly the date of the intrusions of protestantism; the history of the men who introduced it; the occasion which gave it birth; the whole series of the contests and cabals; the artifices and crimes; the events and circumstances, which accompanied and aided its propagation. And from these, we know that it is recent:—we know that it is only the creature of yesterday.

However, on a subject so important, and on a fact which is so intimately connected with the interests of the salvation of a multitude of my fellow-brethren, it is not on the authority of general assertion, that I can reasonably expect, or wisely wish, to gain belief. To gain belief, above all, from men who have been nursed to the strongest prejudices, it is proper to diffuse round each assertion the blaze of evidence. Certainly, my brethren, and this is what alone I propose, and confidently hope to do. Only I shall defer much of my evidence, till my discourse next Sunday; when again, the perpetuity of the church will form the great object of our consideration.

To-day, then, in order merely that you may not return home without some distinct ideas on this important subject; or at least, that I may put you in the way of acquiring, very easily some distinct ideas respecting it, let me suggest to you the following simple method. On your return to your homes, take down from its shelf the history of any christian nation under heaven;—the annals of kings; the lives of princes, warriors or statesmen, who have flourished at any period, between the introduction of christianity, and the era of the reformation. Read a few pages of the volume; fixing upon any age or epoch, that you please. Observe the practices of the times; the manners and maxims of the men; the order and principles of the government. Ask yourselves, as you read,—is this the history of protestantism and protestants? Do these times, these men, these manners, resemble the times, the men, the manners of the reformation?—Is there aught that conveys a notion of the protestant religion? Useless questions, my brethren! No, what you read, you find is little else but the history of catholicity and catholics. Take down, in like manner, if you have such work, the history of the church; and just as I have recommended in the case of profane history, place your finger, at once, upon any period that precedes the opening of the sixteenth century. Ask, if that period were protestant? Ask its pastors, its people, its tenets, its discipline, if they resembled the teachers, the professors, the creeds, the practices of pro-

testantism? You will find, that they did not resemble them even remotely. The history which you read, you again discover, is the history of catholics and catholicity. No Luther, you remark, had yet risen up to teach the faithful, that they were sleeping in the lap of idolatry;—no Calvin to instruct them, that their religion was tyranny and superstition. The christian universe, with the few exceptions which I have often noticed,—its great kingdoms, provinces and cities, adored the same religion which the catholic adores at present. Protestantism had not yet an embryo existence.

In the series of the sermons which I have lately been addressing to you, I have presented several instances of the fascination of illusion, and of the extreme facility with which men have both cheated the credulity of others, and suffered their own credulity to be cheated likewise. I am going to exhibit additional instances of these evils, on the occasion of the object which I am now discussing;—instances, which invented by the protestants to establish the divinity of protestantism, do, in reality, if wisely discussed, effectually demonstrate its want of divinity; and by their absurdity shew as clearly, as the most positive proofs could do it, that the protestant claims to public veneration, are groundless and inefficient.

You have seen, my brethren, that perpetuity of duration, from the ages of the apostles through the lapse of time, is an essential appendage of the church of Jesus Christ;—and you have seen, also, that the protes-



tants admit the necessity and existence of such perpetuity. The consequence therefore is, that maintaining as they do, that the protestant establishment is the real church of Jesus Christ,—maintaining this, they are consequently bound to shew, that their establishment is indeed perpetual:—at least, they are in decency bound to make the attempt to shew it. Let me say it, to the credit of their consistency, they own all this; and without indeed shewing, they have boldly dared to attempt to shew it.

One of the methods by which, for a considerable length of time, a multitude of the reformers endeavoured to prove the perpetuity of the protestant church, is an artifice with which, if your learning be not yet acquainted, your curiosity on hearing it will be surprised: and, either you will smile through contempt, or weep through pity, to think that on so preposterous a principle, men, for a moment, could have been induced to have risked their eternal happiness. Convinced then, that before the period of the pretended reform of Luther, there did not, in any corner of the universe, exist a church, that in its creed and practices resembled the institutions of protestantism,—and honestly, too, acknowledging this fact,—a great multitude of the first advocates of the reformation contended, that *there always had existed, not indeed a visible, but an INVISIBLE CHURCH; and that INVISIBLE CHURCH* they again contended, WAS PROTESTANT! The defenders of this system, singular as it may seem to you, were many

of the most able and warmest friends of the protestant revolution. They were Bishop Jewell, a man extolled in this country, perhaps beyond any of his contemporaries, "*that luminary,*" Mr. Churton, has lately told us, "*of his country, and of the christian name;*"\* Perkins, John Regius, Napper, Fulk,—and a variety of distinguished names, in every place where protestantism had found abettors. "*It is true,*" says Jewell, in his Apology for the Church of England, "*that before the days of Luther, our church was not visible to the world:*"—a circumstance, which with Bishop Jewell, the above writers all acknowledge. The consequence, therefore, in order to shelter their own consistency, became necessary:—maintaining, as they did, that the protestant is the true church; and allowing, as they did, that the true church is perpetual,—the consequence became necessary, to maintain that until their time, of course, it had been *invisible*.

After having thus stated to you a system, by which many of the best defenders of the protestant cause have accounted, as they supposed, for the perpetuity of protestantism, perhaps you will expect, that I shall detain you with its refutation. It should certainly seem necessary that I should do it. Alas! No, my brethren, although even I do myself consider the above system as the most artful and specious defence of protestant perpetuity, which protestant ingenuity has invented, yet is there now no need to undertake its re-

\* Life of Nowell.

futation. It is in these more enlightened days, abandoned by the protestants themselves; and like many other theories of the first reformers, which served the purpose of the moment,---that of imposing upon the ignorant,---it is now derided as ridiculous. The protestant has now the good sense to see, and the honesty to acknowledge, that it is neither reconcileable with the sacred scriptures, nor with reason. An invisible, and yet *universal* church, he now owns, is an absurdity. A church he rationally professes at present, is a "*society*:" and consequently *visible*. "*The church*," says Dr. Daubeny, "*is a society; and therefore it must be known; for to call men to be the members of an invisible society, is, if not a contradiction, yet an absurdity in terms.*" Certainly, an invisible church is an absurdity in terms. And then too, mark the other absurdity which its defenders appended to it,---*that this invisible church was protestant!* As if, being invisible, it could be known what was its religion! This deduction, which to the protestant was chiefly important, is more preposterous, than the premises upon which it rests. It is proving a vision by a dream;---as the whole system, in fact, is the attempt to prove a silly error by a silly fable.

However, although such be the palpable absurdity of this once favourite project of accounting for protestant perpetuity, that the men most interested in its defence have abandoned it; and as the learned protestant, Rogers, unkindly remarks on its ancient abettors, "*it*



*has perished with the enthusiasts that pursued it,"*—yet, do I not deem the delineation which I have made of it, or the reflections which I have suggested on the occasion of it, superfluous or unnecessary. I have described it, for various reasons. I have described it, because in my own opinion,---absurd as it is,---it is the least absurd of the various systems, by which the advocates of the protestant heresy have attempted to account for protestant perpetuity. Were I a protestant, resolved to remain such, it is that which I should adopt; because I can discover no other scheme that can account for it so conveniently. I have described it, to shew you, on what baseless visions the fabric of error reposes. But, I have also done it, to prove in particular these two important truths,---that in the opinions of a great host of the enlightened members of the protestant church, perpetuity is, in the first place, an essential characteristic of the true religion;---and secondly, (mark this well) that in the opinions of this same host of enlightened men, the protestant church has no other claim to perpetuity, but that which it derives through the fabulous medium of *invisibility*.

But, let me now proceed to the consideration of another method, by which a still larger portion of the protestant community, both in the two preceding ages, and a great multitude in the present age, have endeavoured,---they conceive,---more rationally and more successfully, to account for the perpetuity of their establishment. It is a method, it is true, which is very

dissimilar in its nature, from that which I have just unfolded,—being the imaginary demonstration of a *visible* perpetuity. *It is dissimilar in its nature*,—but much do I doubt, whether to your good sense it will appear very dissimilar in the measure of its absurdity. It is, like the system already discussed, the invention of partiality, and the subterfuge of prejudice:—and like it, demonstrates to what feeble expedients men will have recourse, when they are pushed to extremities,—catching at shadows, as when they are drowning, it is said, men sometimes catch at straws.

The method to which I am alluding, and by which the protestants pretend to account for the perpetuity of their church, is briefly this:—I will give it in their own words. After admitting, as we do, that the true church is perpetual, and its perpetuity always visible, they continue thus:—“there have existed in different nations, and in different ages, religious men, who, just as we do, have condemned the tyranny of the church of Rome; reprobated many of its doctrines, and abhorred its superstitions. Such were the Albigenses and Vaudois; the Wickliffites and Hussites. These men were the forefathers of the protestant religion; and linked as they were to the earlier ages, they give it a degree of duration, that is venerable and commanding:—they give it a claim to perpetuity.” It is thus, if you consult a multitude of protestant writers, that they reason:—it is thus, that they triumphantly account, they imagine, for the most important charac-

teristic of their establishment;—bestowing eulogies upon men, who do not merit them; and affixing interest to a claim, which, so far from recommending the cause of the protestantism, will be found, on examination, to detract from its recommendation.

“The Albigenes and Vaudois, it is said, the Wickliffites and Hussites were protestants, and the forefathers of the reformation.” Well, without contesting the question of the protestantism of these men, inquire, in the first place, in what ages they existed? In order to aid the claims of protestant perpetuity, they should reach a great length on the chain of time. When did they flourish? What space did they fill up in the lapse of ages? My brethren, consulting the rolls of history, you will find, that the most ancient of these believers,—the Albigenes and Vaudois,—flourished only, or departed from the parent church, in the twelfth century. The Wickliffites and Hussites existed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Consequently, although even we were to give these men to protestantism, and to add their antiquity to its duration, still are its claims to catholicity, as they repose upon this title, insignificant. It is but adding a few links to the short chain of a few ages:—it is forming, at most, a chain of six or seven centuries, which, to give a claim to perpetuity, should contain eighteen. For, looking into the ages which preceded those that I have mentioned, where do you find the protestant forefathers of these sects? Looking into the eleventh, the tenth,



and the antecedent centuries, where do you,—save in the Manichæans,—find a vestige of these sects?—Certainly, no where. And yet, if the protestant church were catholic, then should it have existed, and be able to trace its existence, along the chain of every age. Thus, even the admission, or the proof, that the Albigenes, the Vaudois, the Wickliffites, and the Hussites, were protestants, would be a very slender aid to the cause of the reformation; and a very meagre attestation of its perpetuity.

But, it is when I come to ascertain what were the tenets of these heretics, that I wonder most, that the protestants should claim them for their predecessors. Their tenets, except in the article of opposition to the parent church, had hardly any resemblance to those of protestantism; and they were of a nature, some of them, equally abhorrent, both from reason and religion. For my own part, it appears to me, after having discussed their tenets, that were I a protestant, rather than claim a succession, *in traduce*, through the mediums of such men, I would boldly believe that my religion was divine, although it had no succession whatever; but abruptly began with the apostles of the reformation.

The Albigenes, the most ancient of these heretics, were a horde of ignorant fanatics, whose doctrines, as far as they can be collected from the few writers, who have attempted to describe them, were those of Manichæism, modified, in some instances, by the visions of

the different leaders, who at different periods, rose up to conduct this sect. Like the disciples of Manes, the Albigenses believed in the existence of two principles, or creators,—the one good, the other bad;—the one, the author of invisible and spiritual things; the other, the parent of visible and corporal things. They admitted, in like manner, two Christs,—the one good, who had not appeared in this world; the other bad, who, clothed in a fantastic body, had died, and risen again in appearance. They denied the resurrection of the body; condemned marriage; reprobated all the sacraments; rejected the Old Testament, &c. The doctrines of the Vaudois were very different from the preceding. They differed from the parent institute, only in a few articles; and in these there was nothing of the bold impiety, that marked the tenets of the Albigenses. They were the suggestions chiefly of fanaticism, resting upon stupid ignorance. They believed it unlawful for the clergy to possess the most trifling share of property;—and that whoever in that body did possess property, ceased by such possession to be the minister of Jesus Christ;—and consequently, they concluded, could not validly, administer any sacrament. They considered it likewise a crime on any occasion to administer, or to take an oath:—and judges, they maintained, who condemned any malefactors to death, were guilty of mortal sins, &c. The Wickliffites were a sect confined to the limits of this island. They united,—many of them at least, the fanaticism of the Vau

dois, to the impiety of the Albigenses; and they were also more inflammatory and violent, than either.—They were a band of incendiaries. They taught,—and this was an artful expedient to seduce the vulgar, —that all right to perform any function in the church; and all power to exercise any authority in the state, are forfeited by the commission of a mortal sin. They believed, that whatever happens, happens necessarily; that man sins necessarily, and that God approves of sin, &c. The Hussites,—men whom the protestants very loudly extol,\*—were a cast of heretics similar in many features to the disciples of Wickliff, from whom they appear to have borrowed many of their seditious and erroneous doctrines. Like the Wickliffites, they professed to believe, that popes, bishops, and priests; kings, princes, and magistrates, all lose their authority by the perpetration of a crime.—Then, appending various consequences to this opinion, they maintained, consistently enough with such a principle, that therefore the faithful owe no respect, or deference, to the injunctions of their superiors, except where their in-

\*Luther, indeed, did not approve of assimilating the Hussites with his followers. *"I will never,"* he says to Eckius, *"approve of the schism of the Bohemians, because by their own private authority they separated themselves from the church; and broke its unity."* Com. ad Gal.—(As if Luther had not done the same.) Elsewhere he says, *"Huss does not agree with me. If he were a heretic, I am ten times a greater heretic; because he has said little compared to me."*



junctions appear *to their own reason*, unexceptionable and just. These, where they differed from the catholic church, were the leading tenets of those various heretics. And are these tenets,---think you,---that should render the protestants ambitious of having the believers of them for their predecessors?

It is a circumstance, also to be here remarked, that besides the doctrines of these heretics which I have noticed, and in which they dissented from the catholic church, they professed other doctrines, which did not differ from those of the catholic church;---but yet, which differed entirely from those of the reformation. With the exception of the Albigenses, these sectarists all admitted the seven sacraments of our church; they believed in transubstantiation, and said mass, as we do. They invoked the assistance of the saints; venerated images; and owned a purgatory, &c. So that, whether you appeal to the errors of these men, or to their opinions which were not erroneous, you find, that in neither case, they resembled the religions of the reformation. It is a gross imprudence in the protestant, to attempt to trace his ancestry through such mediums. To trace it through the medium of their errors, is disgraceful:---to trace it through the medium of the truths, in which they agreed with us, is an absurdity. Their errors, a wise protestant would blush to profess:---and their truths, because they were catholic, he would reject. But, the fact is, except in their hostility to the mother institute, these heretics scarcely resembled in

a single feature, the religions of the reformation.—They resembled the reformers in their hostility: and hence the eulogies, which Beza, Claude, and a host of the new religionists, bestow so lavishly upon them. But surely, no wise protestant will allow, that the mere circumstance of similar hostility to catholicity, is sufficient to assimilate religions; or to unite the members of various heresies into one establishment. And if it do not, then is all the labour lost, and all the ingenuity unavailing, with which a multitude of protestants have laboured to prove the perpetuity of their church, through the medium of the Albigenses, Vaudois, Wickliffites and Hussites. Their labour, indeed, and ingenuity, as I have before remarked, prove this,—that perpetuity is an essential appendage of the divinity of the church;—but they prove, that protestantism does not possess it.\*

It is not mine to advocate the cause of protestantism, nor to suggest methods by which it might, with

\* There is great inconsistency in the praises which the protestants bestow on the followers, in particular, of Wickliff and John Huss;—and there is, also, an implied condemnation of their own separation from the parent church. The Wickliffites and Hussites, they pretend, were protestants, although they believed in transubstantiation; invoked the saints, &c. If that were the case, why then, in their disputes with us, do our dissenting brethren object so strongly against these doctrines? Or, if these men were protestants, and yet believed these doctrines, what becomes of the great modern apology for separating from the church, on account of these doctrines?

the most specious air of plausibility, defend its feeble pretensions to catholicity. But, if it be true, that opinions, such as those which I have been enumerating, and a strong hostility to the church, suffice to render men protestants,—why not assert at once, that then, all those heretics were protestants, who, from the most early ages, till the period of the reformation, had abandoned the parent institute? Certain it is, that the opinions of many of the ancient heretics approached nearer to those of protestantism, than did the doctrines of the Albigenses and Vaudois, &c.; whilst, in point of hostility, their rancour was the same. Why not, therefore, lay claim to them, as links in the chain of succession? To be consistent, the protestant should do so. And then, here is the benefit that would result from it; and which, giving him joy for the honour, we should not contest,—then, he would really vindicate to himself a series of succession, venerable for its length, and awful for its duration. The origin of heresy is coeval with the age that saw christianity introduced; and its progress forms a chain, that reaches from that era, through the night of time, to the present day. Linking himself, therefore, to this, the protestant might boast the same perpetuity, nearly, as does the catholic. He might by this artifice, arrogate to his establishment a visible perpetuity, from the age of the apostles. He is surely unwise in not doing it; since by doing it, he would also act consistently. However, so it is:—he, modestly deems the artifice igno-



minious, and rejects it. Absurd modesty!—therefore, should he reject the lineage through the Albigenses and Vaudois.

III. To make the parts of this discourse correspond to the divisions of that which I addressed to you last Sunday, I have still one consideration to present to your attention. It is, a repetition, nearly, of what I then remarked: at least, it is so similar, that could I be assured you retained the recollection of what I then remarked, I might, with propriety, be induced to pass it over. In my last discourse, you may remember, I shewed you, that as the true church is necessarily catholic, so also its name is *catholic*:—as it is necessarily catholic, and its name is catholic, so its members are known by the appellation of *catholics*. These maxims, I proved to you, are consonant to the sacred scriptures; to the authority of the holy fathers; to the suggestions of reason, and to the import of the words of the creed,—“*I believe in the holy CATHOLIC church.*” Advancing then to the application of these maxims, I shewed you likewise, that the church to which you and I belong, besides being catholic, is alone distinguished by the name of *catholic*;—its members alone are designated by the appellation of *catholics*. Therefore, I concluded, the church to which you and I belong, is alone the true church;—its members alone are the members of the fold of Christ. The conclusions are evident, if the premises be true: and the premises who will venture to contest?

The next consequences resulting from them, and which it is my present object to point out, are these; that therefore, any religion which is not denominated *catholic*, is not the true church:—any members of a religion, who are not known by the name of *catholics*, are not the members of the true church. The reasoning and the deductions are strictly logical; being founded upon the rules of *opposites*; and having for their premises, the same maxims which I have said are so incontestible.

To assist your reason in making the application of this process of simple reasoning to the religions of the reformation, is perhaps superfluous. You have, probably, made it already. It results from it;—that since none of the reformed religions are distinguished by the title of *catholic*, therefore they are none of them the catholic church; nor consequently the true church:—since none of the members of the reformed religions are characterised by the appellation of *catholics*, therefore, they are none of them the members of the catholic church; nor consequently the members of the true church. It is, indeed, a fact, which you may verify every day, that so little are the protestants accustomed to call their religions *catholic*, or themselves *catholics*, that if you were accidentally to apply the appellations to either, they would not understand you. They would conceive the application a mistake; or perhaps an insult,—conveying, in their ideas, the designation of what they have malevolently nicknamed *popery* and

*papists.* It would be in vain for me to attempt to inform you, what are the various names of the reformed religions. The number is countless:---and they are derived, nearly all of them, either from the name of their respective authors, or from the character of some peculiar tenet. They are Lutheranism, Calvinism, Socinianism, Anabaptism, Presbyterianism, &c:---whilst the members also, as it is natural, of these religions, are known by correspondent appellations,---Lutherans, Calvinists, Socinians, Anabaptists, Presbyterians. They are known by no other names. They are the names by which they characterise each other and themselves, in their writings, canons, laws, and conversations.

Heresy is nearly, in every age, alike. It was precisely in the early periods of the christian institute, as it was among the reformers. The sects, which then detached themselves from the parent church, distinguished themselves by different appellations,---appellations derived either from the name of the heresiarch, whose artifices had seduced them from the truth; or analogous to the bearings of their leading tenets.---They were Marcianites, Valentinians, Pelagians, Gnostics, Iconoclasts. Now, my brethren, from the circumstances of the nature and novelty of these names, the fathers of the church, who combated these heretics, reasoned exactly as I have done. They proved from them alone, that they were heretics. *“If you hear,”* says St. Jerom, *“those who are called christians,*



*designated by any other name,---such as Marcianites, Valentinians---be assured, that they are not the church of Christ, but the synagogue of Antichrist.*"\* Thus, also, do all the fathers, who refute heresy, combat it. "Indeed," says the learned protestant, Dr. Field, "*it is not to be denied, that the naming after the names of men, was in the primitive church, peculiar and proper to heretics and schismatics.*"† Now, my brethren, did the fathers reason correctly? Are their conclusions true? If they did reason correctly, and their conclusions be true, then does it follow evidently, (applying their reasoning and conclusions to the religions of protestantism,) that, therefore, these religions are, all of them, heretical. Because, like the ancient heresies, they are, all of them, known by new and peculiar names. In reality, let men reason as they will;—but, just as it is natural and consistent to suppose, that the true church should retain the name of the true church; or the ancient religion, the ancient appellation,—so it is easy and proper to conceive, that a church with a false name, is a false church;—and a religion with a new name, a new religion. What instruction, if men had the wisdom to seek it, might be borrowed from the import of a single word!

Wherefore, my brethren, having in this, and my preceding sermon, attentively reviewed, and candidly compared together, the attestations of the *catholicity* of the church, as they relatively exist, and alternately

\* Contra Lucifer.

† Treatise of the Church.

present themselves, in our own establishment, and in the reformed societies,—what is the general conclusion, which your reason has deduced? If indeed you admitted, and bore well in your recollection, the definition which I gave of catholicity,—and which also I took from protestant divines,—the conclusion, that you must have deduced, is obvious. That definition was, you remember, that catholicity, synonymous to universality, imports the *wide diffusion* of the true church throughout the universe; and its *perennial duration* from the age of Christ to the present period—and henceforward to the end of time. If, therefore, contemplating the diffusion and duration of our great establishment, you applied the definition to it, you found, that here the object defined and the definition accorded exactly:—and you concluded that, therefore, *our establishment is divine*. Contemplating the extent and continuance of the reformed societies, if you applied the definition to them, you found, that there the objects defined and the definition disagreed:—therefore, you concluded, *these societies are the works of men*. Would only the enemies of our religion, in this, and in various other questions, adhere to their own definitions, it would be easy, from these alone, to convince them of the truth of *our* religion, and of the falsehood of *theirs*. *Our* religion,—referring here to the characteristic of catholicity,—corresponds by its extent, to those magnificent promises made to the true church, that it should “*possess nations for its inheritance; and*

*have the universe for its boundary:*" whilst *theirs*, placed, each, on the great scale of comparison by its side, are trifling and insignificant,---restricted to a kingdom, or narrowed sometimes to a single province. Our religion verifies by its duration, the assurance that "*the gates of hell should not prevail against it,*" having, steady as the rock upon its centre, withstood, during the long length of eighteen hundred years, the storms of error, and the ravages of persecution; whilst *theirs*, new-formed conventions, have not yet lasted the little space of three centuries; fluctuating, too, during that interval, like the waves, or moving like the quick-sands of our shores.

To explain the reason why, notwithstanding the evidence of the divinity of our religion, men frequently reject it, and revere institutions which are manifestly human,—the method is to refer to those maxims which I suggested to you at the opening of this discourse,—"that men are often the dupes to the illusions of the prince of darkness; and the captives to his snares:"—the method is to appeal to ignorance, to prejudice, to partiality, and to the perversity of human reason. It is with error, as it is with vice. Error is as naturally the disorder of the understanding, as vice is the disorder of the will. Thus, just as every day, we see men prefer corruption to innocence, and the pleasures of a moment to the blessings of an eternity—just so, (neither do I wonder at the circumstance, for Christ Jesus had foretold that "*heresies should*



come")—but, just so, do multitudes prefer falsehood to truth, and folly to wisdom. Apply these principles to our dissenting brethren, and you will conceive at once the cause why, notwithstanding the evidences that mark the divinity of our religion, they unwisely reject it; and with greater want of wisdom still, prefer to it institutions, that are manifestly the creation of passion and fanaticism.

To prevent these evils, so fatal to the interests of salvation, let me merely repeat the admonition of St. Peter, which I have suggested already from the chapter whence the text of my discourse is borrowed:—*brethren be prudent and vigilant*;—beware of the artifices of Satan; of the power of prejudice, and the seductions of passion. Have the heart always open to the impressions of grace; and the mind to the rays of truth. Then, as St. Peter concludes the chapter,—*the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory, will perfect us, and confirm us, and establish us. To him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.——Amen.*



## SERMON VII.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

### ON THE WANT OF APOSTOLICITY IN THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

*And Jesus said to Simon, fear not; for from henceforth, thou shalt be a fisher of men. St. Luke, v. 10.*

THE history of the miracle to which the church solicits your attention on this day, presents a very striking testimony of the power of our great Redeemer. It exhibits him displaying the influences of his authority over the sea; and shewing his dominion over its inhabitants. He commands the waves to bring the fishes; and the fishes to approach in shoals, to the spot where Simon and his companions had been labouring the whole night, with fruitless industry. He commands,—and at his word, Simon letting go the net, “so great was the multitude of fishes,” which crowded into it, that “it brake.”

The general object of the miracles of Christ was to



impress the minds of those who were witnesses to them,—and indeed all others to the end of time,—with the conviction of his divinity; and thereby dispose them to the more ready admission of his sacred doctrines. Such, no doubt, was the object of the miracle just recounted. However, from the peculiar features which marked it, and from the peculiar inference which Christ deduces from it, such, on this occasion, was not its only object. It was evidently designed to prove something more than the mere divinity of its author. Its first object, to judge from the result, was to induce Simon to follow him:—its next, to judge from the circumstances, was to prepare him to comprehend the subsequent successes that were soon to crown his new vocation. The wonderful and miraculous draught of fishes was intended to be the figure of that still more wonderful and more miraculous draught of *men*, which this apostle made soon after; when casting, as it were, the net of the divine word into the sea of human life, he drew into the bark of the church a countless multitude of its inhabitants. It is hence,—from his vocation and his successes,—that Jesus calls him “*a fisher of men.*” “*Henceforth, thou shalt be a fisher of men.*”

With the history of the life of Simon, after his vocation to the sacred ministry, you are well acquainted; and you know, how exactly he verified the figure of the successful fisherman. After the ascension of his divine Master, and the descent of the Holy Ghost,—

on the occasion of the first discourse, which he addressed to the people—he induced, in the unbelieving Jerusalem itself, three thousand individuals to adore *Him*, whom, a few days before, they had thought it an act of piety to blaspheme. On the occasion of his second discourse, he converted five thousand. And now, widening the sphere of his zeal from Jerusalem to all Judæa,---from Judæa he soon widened it to most of the civilized nations of the universe; establishing churches in them all; and in some of them, creating proselytes to truth, who, in numbers and respectability, vied with, if they did not outdo, the multitude and dignity of their pagan worshippers. In Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and throughout the whole of Asia Minor;---in various parts of Europe, among which, several antiquaries are pleased to include this nation;---in Rome, ambitious Rome itself, the multitudes, who, excited by the voice of this apostle, and aided by the influences of grace, received the doctrines of revelation, were immense,---exceeding both the measure of calculation, and the most sanguine expectations of the most ardent zeal. To use the words of the gospel of this day, and supposing the miraculous draught of fishes, which it relates, to be an allegory alluding to Simon and his successes, it is almost correct to say, that *“letting go his net, it inclosed so great a multitude of fishes, that it breake,”*

Having thus, in a few words, illustrated the passage which I have chosen for my text—and which likewise

is connected with the subsequent parts of the discourses, which I have to address to you, I hasten to resume the discussion of the question, that, for some time past, has engaged our attention—*the divinity of the christian church*. There are four great features, you recollect, which are, almost universally, allowed to belong to this sacred attribute, and to point it out. Three of these we have patiently considered; and your good sense has determined to which among the different societies of christians, that call themselves churches, these three features most justly appertain. There remains but one other feature to be examined—*the church's apostolicity*. That done, I shall have completed the important investigation; finished the series of my controversial discourses; and put it into the power of the most ignorant,—if they be only candid and in earnest,—to decide a question, which is pregnant with every thing that is dear to the christian and the man. Give me, then, again your attention, whilst I discuss this last part of my subject. The discussion is again, truly, even peculiarly, momentous; presenting a variety of propositions and objects, as interesting, as striking, and as obvious, as aught which piety can contemplate, or reason can revolve.

I. That the true church is essentially *apostolical*, is a proposition so clear, that it should seem unnecessary for me to attempt to prove it. It cannot be contested by the believer in the christian dispensation; and it must be acknowledged by all those, who revere the Nicæan creed. “*I believe*,” this holy instrument says,



"*one holy, catholic, and APOSTOLIC church.*" The church is a divine fabric planned by Jesus Christ;—but, reared, beautified, and completed by the apostles:—and, as the apostles reared, beautified, and completed it, designed it to last and to flourish, till the end of time. "*You are built,*" says St. Paul, "*upon the foundation of the apostles;*" (Eph.) "*and no one,*" he adds, in another epistle, "*can lay any other foundation but that which is laid.*" (1 Cor.) Indeed, that the true church is apostolical, is a truth, which the protestant allows as we do.

The only circumstance, which on this subject, can admit of any thing like dispute, is to fix the exact import or extent of the term *apostolical*; that is, to determine the precise objects, which once essentially *apostolical*, were destined always to remain such. However, fortunately, even here,—the matter is so simple,—there is little room for doubt or altercation. There are certain points, and those are the material points, which are so clear, that very few contest them. For example, it is admitted by almost every believer in revelation, that Christ Jesus, by the agency of his apostles, established a distinct society—*an apostolical society*,—founded upon peculiar principles, and regulated by peculiar laws; and a society, whose duration was to continue till the end of time: in conformity to these assurances, "*you are a chosen people;*" (1 Pet.) and "*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,*" (the church). Consequently, there still exists, and from the time of the apostles, there always must have ex-

isted, an *apostolical society*. In like manner, it is allowed, that Christ Jesus established in this society a sacred ministry; imparting, for the spiritual benefit of the faithful, *a mission* to his apostles;—which also, like the society itself, was to be perpetuated to the end of ages; in conformity with these words—“*go teach all nations; . . . as the Father hath sent me, so I send you; and behold, I am with you all days, to the end of the world.*” (Mat. xxviii.) Consequently, there subsists, and “*all days,*” there has subsisted, an *apostolical mission*; a sacred ministry, which is the heir of the functions and jurisdiction of the apostles. It is, in the third place, granted equally, that our Redeemer communicated to his apostles *a code of doctrines*; which likewise he destined to be the perpetual and unchangeable rule of his adorers; in conformity with that awful sentence of St. Paul, “*though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, than that which we (the apostles) have preached to you, let him be accursed.*” (Gal.) Consequently again, there continues in the church, and always has continued in it, a code of *apostolic doctrines*.

To the import of the term *apostolical*, ingenuity, it is possible, might append a few more notions, or objects, besides the three which I have enumerated. But, those three it must append:—and those three, it will on examination be forced to own, are sufficient for all the purposes of wisely defining *apostolicity*; or of securely discovering the church which is *apostoli-*

*cal.* They are the ideas and the points, which, when alluding to these questions, or discussing them, are suggested by the Augsburg confession; by the confessions of several Calvinistic societies; by the creed of the thirty-nine articles; and by the apostles and most able defenders of the reformation.

What, therefore, after having thus determined the import of this characteristic of the true religion, remains for me to do, is, to make the application of the principles which I have laid down; and from the application deduce the inference, where the true church is seated. My plan must be similar to that, which has conducted me through the series of my previous discourses,—consisting (since it is a process of parallels) of alternate views of the protestant and catholic claims to the contested attribute. I shall, indeed, to-day, make one deviation from my preceding plan. Instead, as hitherto I have done, of considering, in the first place, the claims of catholicity, I will, first, consider those of protestantism. It is an inversion of order, that is completely immaterial; because it will present precisely the same objects; and afford the same facilities to compare them, as did the order which I have pursued in my other discourses.

II. The first circumstance, I have said, which is required to fulfil the import of the characteristic of apostolicity, is, that the *society* originally founded under Jesus Christ by the apostles, should still, as they founded it, exist; and have existed always from the age of



those holy men. This, I have remarked, is the first notion included in the import of the characteristic; and that which the reformers have nearly all suggested. "*The words of Christ,*" says the Book of Homilies,, "*are most plain in this behalf, saying, that the spirit of truth shall abide with the church for ever; and be always with it to the world's end.*". (Part. 2.)

If, therefore, the protestant church be the true church,—the church founded by the apostles,—then is it plain, it must have subsisted and flourished, not during the little space of two or three centuries; but the whole space that has filled up the interval, between the time of the apostles and the age in which we live. This proposition is plain, as the plain one on which it is hinged.

And has,—this to the protestant is a vitally interesting question,—has the protestant church existed during this venerable length of interval?—You are aware that this is a question, which, more than once, I have asked already; and to which I have already more than once replied;—which, consequently, referring you only to my answers, I might here pass over with propriety. Certainly, both the question, and the answer which I am proceeding to give to it, are repetitions,—perhaps useless repetitions. However, (and this is the reason why I make them) they are repetitions which I love; repetitions which cannot be too often re-echoed in the ears of the protestant;—repetitions which place the emptiness of the claims of protestantism, and the solid-

ity of the titles of catholicity, to the character of apostolicity, in the most striking points of view. Be this my apology for saying, almost in the same words, what I have said to you before.

Has then the protestant church existed from the time of the apostles to the present day? Alas! I have shewn you, upon the authority of a multitude of protestants themselves, that it has not. Upon the authority of some, I have shewn you, that if it did exist, it was *invisible*;—and upon the authority of others, I have shewn you, that if it existed *visibly*, it existed in the Albigenses, Vaudois, &c.—a chain of ignominious heretics, whose whole length, at best, is but the span of a few centuries. These alone are proofs sufficient to attest the novelty of the protestant church. I did say also, on the occasion when I employed these proofs;—that the voice of history, and the silent language of ancient monuments, render the recentness of protestantism incontestible. As, however, I rather hinted at the force of these testimonies, than described them, let me dwell here a few moments on their reconsideration.

I lay down this maxim, which, I think, no impartial man, and I am sure, no wise one, will contest—that, if protestantism be the apostolical religion, and have existed, as the apostolical religion must have done, from the era of the apostles, down to the present period—then, would the histories of different epochs, and the monuments of various ages;—or the history

or monuments of some epoch or age—attest its existence. For, if by the light of history, we can correctly ascertain the existence and duration of all the great empires, which have flourished during the last two thousand years, and trace the chief revolutions which have distinguished them;—if by its aid, we can, in different centuries, make out the existence and duration of very trifling institutions; mark the occurrence of very uninteresting events; and follow, in some instances, along a chain of many hundred years, the unimportant genealogies of very unimportant families:—if, by the silent, but eloquent, attestations of the monuments, which are placed in the avenues of life—some of them mouldering on their bases, and some still braving the injuries of time,—if by their attestations, we can verify what, at different periods and in different places, were the practices, the habits, the manners of the men who erected them, and who saw them erected—surely, in the ordinary course of things, it ought to appear incontestible, that had protestantism, since the age of the apostles, been the religion of the christian world, or of a considerable part of the christian world, both the rolls of history, and the monuments of time would tell it. The rolls of history, which in each age, private curiosity has composed, and public curiosity preserved, are numerous; and the monuments are more numerous still than the rolls of history,

And, that history and the monuments of past ages would tell, that protestantism,—had it been such,—



was formerly the religion of the christian world, will appear peculiarly evident, if we reflect, at the same time, on the nature and the maxims of religion. The christian religion, however it be considered, whether as a rule of practice, or a system of belief, is an object which enters into nearly all the transactions of human life; is blended with its public functions; and regulates its private duties,—influencing constantly, the feelings, the habits, the interests, and the passions of mankind. It is the strongest spring and principle of their actions: ---the strongest, because the most important. So that, in fact, even the political histories of each nation, are the histories of its religion.

Satisfied that these notions are correct, the next step which my reason bids me take, is to appeal to the voice of history, and to the language of ancient monuments. Well, and I have done this. I have appealed, in the first place, to history;—read the annals of many illustrious nations;—consulted the compilations of several distinguished scholars, the works of some ancient, and the labours of several modern, writers. I have, in particular, in order that no partialities might mislead my judgment,—consulted the histories which have been composed by protestants; whose interest it was, if protestantism be an apostolical religion, to shew it. I have revolved these seriously; beginning with the earlier periods of the christian institute, and patiently considering each revolving age, till the era of the reformation, as it passed in review before me. Keeping

constantly in my recollection, the principles and practices of protestantism, I asked each object almost, in its transit, whether, to judge from its nature and the circumstances appended to it, it implied the belief of the religion which the protestant reveres at present? I asked the manners and customs of the people;—the manners and customs of the princes,—the public institutions, and the forms of governments,—the features of the events and revolutions,—the sports and recreations of the vulgar. I asked, these, and many other objects, if either they were protestant; or supposed the belief of protestantism; or were consistent with protestantism? I asked this,—attentively comparing each object with its correspondent object, in the reformed religion. And, what was the answer? My brethren, I say it, upon the authority of every protestant historian, who has described the ages antecedent to the reformation. To each question, the answer of each object was,—“No, I was not protestant; nor consistent with protestantism. I either express the belief, or manifestly imply the veneration, of the very maxims which protestantism has discarded. In short, suffice it to say, that if your industry, like mine, will give itself the trouble to consult the annals of ages past, it will not trace there, till the era of the reformation, a single nation, nor a single individual,—except the Albigenes, or the Vaudois were such, (and they were not such) that was protestant.

In like manner, useless as was the labour—I asked the *monuments*, which still adorning the walks of life

have seen ages and generations roll away,—I asked them, if they express or imply the existence of any protestant religion, before the days of Luther? Monuments are, in general, immediately connected with the opinions, the habits and the manners of a nation; and religious monuments, above all, are the faithful expressions of the religious principles of the people that erected them; and of the period that beheld them rise. They are a history, and a commentary, at the same time, upon the history, of a nation. I ask, therefore, that majestic edifice, --that temple of religion, which still fresh in venerable beauty, is now the sanctuary of protestantism, re-echoing each day its canticles, and the witness of its mysteries,--- I ask it, if always, or if anciently, it were protestant;---if the canticles, with which it resounded once; or the mysteries which it once saw celebrated, were the same or similar to those which constitute now, the protestant forms of worship? Conducted by the hand of pensive, but pleasing melancholy, I visit the ruins of yonder building,—a spot, that some centuries ago, was sacred to piety, and the retreat of virtue. I wander amid its mouldering columns, which now support little but the mantling ivy; or amid its moss-covered domes, which are now the dwelling of the dove. Impressed with the solemnity of the spectacle, I seat myself on some neglected stone,—a stone which, perhaps, many hundred years, had figured as an ornament in the sacred fabric; or which, it may be, had been the tomb-stone



of some holy personage, who lived a thousand years ago. Thus situated, I interrogate the scene. I ask, whose hands were those that anciently had reared these stones into an edifice; who the men that once inhabited it;—who the votaries, that for ages had been wont to frequent it? Were they protestant? Are these emblems, these inscriptions, crosses, niches, and broken statues, protestant? Superfluous questions, although important! Just, as did the voice of history; the voice of every monument, and the very dust of every vestige, tell me—no. “No,” replies the venerable temple, “I am not protestant;—and the *very form* in which I am built, demonstrates that I was built for the performance of other mysteries than those which I witness now; and for the sound of other canticles, than those which I hear at present.” “No,” in like manner, replies every holy vestige, “we are not protestant; and it was merely because we are not such, that the anger of protestantism has reduced us to these, heaps of ruins.” These, and similar to these, are the answers which the monuments all give, that have existed through the lapse of four, five, six hundred, or a thousand years. Important testimonies! important at least to those who revere antiquity; and who consider its monuments as the history of preceding ages! They prove that protestantism, a few ages back, had no existence whatever.

But, it is in the annals of religion chiefly, and in the history of the church, that wisdom should most natu-

rally seek, and will most easily trace, the apostolicity, or the want of apostolicity, of any peculiar institute. The annals of religion are diffuse and comprehensive; carefully compiled, and piously preserved;—the mirror, not of fancies and conjectures, but of facts and realities. They contain the accounts of the introduction and propagation of religion, in different nations; the narrative of the lives and succession of the pastors, in various sees; the description of the councils and synods, which, in each age and country, were convened together; the delineation of the creeds, the discipline, the laws, the rites and regulations, both of the great christian institute, and of the multitudinous establishments, that were cut off from its communion. The history of the church contains all this. What consequence, therefore, can be plainer, than that if protestantism were an apostolical religion, the history of church would be chiefly the history of protestantism:—or at least, that the history of protestantism would form some part of its copious annals? Certainly, such would be the case. And yet what is the case? Why, so far, until the sixteenth century, is the history of the church from being the history of protestantism; the history of protestant creeds, protestant councils, protestant sees, protestant prelates, &c. there is not in one nation, nor in the corner of one nation, the vestige of a protestant society. The great and general scenes, which in reading the annals of the church, you contemplate, are the prevalence and power of the catholic

church; catholic societies adoring catholic mysteries; catholic pastors occupying catholic sees; catholic councils enforcing catholic maxims:—in short, the christian universe, with few exceptions, reposing in calm tranquillity under the broad shade of the same institute, that so tenderly shelters us,—ignorant even of the chief part of the doctrines, with which protestantism has disturbed its quiet.

At length, after patiently perusing the annals of fifteen centuries,—in the days, which almost our fathers' fathers might remember, your researches bring you to the origin of protestantism. Fixing your eyes upon an obscure corner of an obscure district of Germany, you there behold a storm begin to gather;—you see the gloom weave itself gradually into a cloud;—and the cloud in a short time descend,---called down, as also it had been formed, by the artifices of a violent individual. It bursts,---and with dreadful explosion diffuses its mischiefs over the extent of the adjoining provinces. This is the first mention of the existence of protestantism; or of a religion such as that which the protestant professes. Surely, my brethren, a church whose earliest date is but in the sixteenth century, is very absurdly denominated apostolical. An apostolical church beginning yesterday!

And, that the date which I have assigned to the origin of protestantism is correct, is a truth which the prejudiced alone, or those who are ignorant of the history of mankind, will call in question. It is the date



assigned to it by protestant historians, and by the authors of protestantism themselves. Luther, its first author, represents himself often, as having, at the commencement of his career, stood unaccompanied, and alone. "*In the beginning of my cause,*" he says, "*by the will of God, it reposed solely upon me.*"\* "*I am the first,*" he boasts to Zuinglius, "*who had the boldness to preach the gospel.*"† And yet, bold and intrepid as he was; and employed, as he pretends, in so sacred an occupation, hear with what feeling eloquence he describes the distress and agitation of his mind. "*I paused,*" he says, "*frequently over the precipice, that yawned beneath me; and I looked down it with a trembling heart. My trembling heart reproved me, objecting this forcible argument to my reason:—what! art thou, then, the only sensible mortal in the universe? Are all but thyself, the dupes of error? Have so many ages passed away in ignorance. But, what! if thou shouldst be the man that is mistaken? What! if damned thyself, thou shouldst also be leading others into damnation?*" In the same manner, most of the chief reformers resign to Luther the unhappy distinction of having been the first, who laid the foundation of the protestant religion. Bucer calls him "*the first apostle of the purer gospel.*" (*Primum apostolum purioris evangelii.*) Camerarius says of him, that "*he neither received his doctrines from Huss, nor Wickliff.*"

\* Ego, in principio causæ meæ, hoc donum divinitus datum habebam, quod tantam causam in me unum recipiebam.

† Christum a nobis primum vulgatum, audemus gloriari.

*He was self-taught—as he asserts of himself, in his own writings.*”\* Calvin acknowledges, that protestantism is a new religion, beginning with the reformation. “*We have been forced,*” he says, “*to depart from the religion of the whole world.*”† Thus, upon the testimony of the best authorities which protestantism can boast, it is admitted, that the date of its origin is not anterior to that which I have assigned—the opening of the sixteenth century. And thus, therefore, recurring once again to the definition of *apostolical*:—if that only be apostolical (as only it is) which reaches from the time of the apostles to any determinate period, then is not the religion of protestantism possessed of this sacred characteristic.

The heretic should be always timid, and extremely wary in the formation of his definitions, lest by defining incautiously, he furnish arms to defeat himself.—This is a point in which heretics, in general, fail:—and amid the host of heretics, there are none that fail more egregiously, than do the protestants. They admit,—such is the evidence which suggests them—a variety of our definitions; and the consequence is, if men had the consistency to follow definitions to their results, it is easy from protestant definitions to refute a multitude of protestant claims. It is so in the case, which I am now discussing. They imprudently define apostolicity, as we do; and their definition, when wisely applied,

\* De Frat. Orthod. Eccl.

† Dissessionem a toto mundo facere coacti sumus. Ep.

is a proof, that their church is not apostolical. You have remarked, indeed, with what ingenuity and industry they have laboured, to make their definition and the situation of their church accord together;—one portion contending, that it is apostolical through the medium of an *invisible society*; another maintaining, that it is apostolical through the medium of the *Albigenses and the Vaudois*:—the latter rushing into Scylla, in order to avoid Charybdis; but, both of them proving to good sense, that their church, in reality, is not apostolical. My brethren, without wondering at them,---pity the illusions of error. Where men err, there must be illusions. Error has no solid ground to stand on.

Having made these desultory reflections on the effects of error, and noticed the inconsistencies of the protestants in the defence of the pretended apostolicity of their religion,---let me add here one other observation, which is both another illustration of their inconsistency, and another proof that their religion is not apostolical. Recal for a moment to your recollection the protestant definition of apostolicity,---that, “to be apostolical, the church must have existed from the apostolic ages.” Recal to your remembrance the words, which in confirmation of this definition, I cited from the Book of Homilies,---a book, which in the thirty-fifth of the thirty-nine articles, is sanctioned, as “*the dictate of the Holy Ghost*.” The words which I then cited, and which are only a small part of those



which attest the same truth,\* are these:—*the words of Christ are most plain in this behalf; saying, that the spirit of truth shall abide with the church FOR EVER; and be ALWAYS with it to the world's end.*" Now, my brethren, mark the inconsistency, and the protestant refutation of the protestant pretensions to apostolicity. In that same volume, which I have just said, the protestants of this nation revere as "the dictate of the Holy Ghost,"—again speaking of the church, it is said:—*"Laity and clergy; learned and unlearned; all sects and degrees of men, women and children, of whole christendom, (an horrible and dreadful thing to think on) have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry, of all other vices most detested by God and damnable to men; THE SPACE OF EIGHT HUNDRED YEARS AND MORE."* Cruel, dreadful, horrible accusation!—and how grossly contradictory to the passage, which I have just quoted from the same important instrument!—I will not, however, dwell either upon the cruelty of the accusation, nor upon its inconsistency. From it there

\* "Our Saviour Christ, departing out of this world to his Father, promised his disciples to send down another comforter, that should continue with them for ever, and direct them into all truth. Neither must we think, that this comforter was either promised, or else given only to the apostles, but also to the universal church of Christ, dispersed throughout the whole world. For unless the Holy Ghost had been always present, governing and preserving the church from the beginning, it could never have sustained so many and great brunts of affliction and persecution, with so little harm as it hath," &c.—*Book of Hom. Part II.*

follows, if what it affirms be true, this plain and obvious consequence,—that therefore, the protestant religion is not apostolical. “*All sects and degrees of men,*” according to it, “*of all christendom, have been drowned in abominable idolatry, the space of eight hundred years and more.*” Therefore, during “the space of eight hundred years and more,” the protestant religion did not subsist: and not having subsisted, it could not be apostolical. No church, according to this accusation, subsisted; therefore, no apostolic church. What is this, but the candid confession, that protestantism is not an apostolic religion? Either then the protestant, to be consistent, should boldly deny, that perpetuity is an appendage of the apostolicity of the true church; or he should prove, that the interruption of eight hundred years in its continuance, is no interruption of its perpetuity. In the former case, he will deny what his own wisdom and the wisdom of the whole christian world have always maintained:—and in the latter, he will prove an absurdity. Such are the dilemmas to which men reduce themselves, when abandoning the maxims of truth, they become the dupes of error.

III. The next object, which in the division of my discourse, and in the definition of the term *apostolical*, I have said, is a necessary appendage to the divinity of the church, is the *mission of its pastors*. I am here entering on the discussion of a question, which is most momentous to the protestant; and a question, which, because it is so momentous, has, perhaps beyond eve-

ry other controverted subject, engaged his attention, and awakened his ingenuity. A church, it is obvious, is not a church without pastors; and pastors, it is equally obvious, are not pastors without a mission.— Without a mission, the exercise of spiritual jurisdiction, and the performance of spiritual functions, by any class of men denominating themselves pastors, are acts of usurpation, and the effects of spiritual tyranny.— Hence, there is not an article of religious controversy more intimately connected with the salvation of the protestant, than that of the mission of his pastors. If it be proved, that his pastors have no mission, then it is proved also, that he has no church; and having no church, it is consequently proved, that he possesses not the necessary mediums of salvation. How serious, and how awful are these considerations!

Aware of the vast importance of this subject, the protestants, I have remarked, have exerted the greatest industry in its discussion. Error is always ingenious; and they have tortured ingenuity to do it, as they imagined, speciously. They have invented a great variety of systems; and to support their systems, a still greater variety of maxims;—but systems and maxims which are the dictate, not of truth, but of the spur of the occasion (for it is a fact, that the protestants, like all other heretics, have formed their principles just in proportion as they wanted them.) Referring to their general defences of the mission of the protestant pastors, you find, that some of them labour to establish



that it is *ordinary*; while others, ridiculing the idea that it is *ordinary*, attempt to prove that it is *extraordinary*;—thus, mutually refuting each other, and presenting in the series of their respective arguments, another striking attestation of the perplexities, the illusions, the contradictions and the absurdities of error. —But, we will proceed to the discussion of the important subject.

When therefore, my brethren, in order to promote the salvation of his creatures, it pleases the mercy of the Almighty to impose new laws upon them,—new duties for their practice, and new doctrines for their belief,—it is the usual regulation of his wisdom, as it is evidently the method of all others the most natural, *to delegate* some favoured individual, or individuals, to impart and execute the beneficent design. This is what is signified by *a mission*; which consists, as here we are considering it, in the special commission thus delegated by God to an individual or individuals, to instruct mankind; to communicate to them his laws; and to perform the functions appended to the new dispensation.

You cannot but be sensible, that on any occasion, when it pleases God to depute such mission, his wisdom takes care to provide, that the proofs which attest it, shall be clear and manifest. A mission imposing new obligations, without such proofs, would not be respected: neither should it, without them, be respected. It is an act of prudence to reject, as an imposi-

tion, the pretended mission, that is not thus established. But, let me illustrate these principles.

Christ Jesus, you all know it, came down from his heavenly throne to establish a new law on earth;—to instruct, correct, and reform mankind. To do this, (mark well his conduct, for it is the model of all future missions) to do this, he tells us, that Great as he was, he received his *mission* from his Eternal Father: “*I come not of myself: He sent me.*” (John.) He tells us, in the next place, that it was merely by virtue of this mission, that he preached:—“*if I give testimony of myself, my testimony is not true.*” (John.) And then too, remark the manner in which he establishes the validity and the certainty of his mission. It is by proofs, my brethren, such as those which I have observed, are under such circumstances necessary;—by proofs clear and manifest;—*by the attestation of miracles.*—“*If I had not done works,*” he says, “*which no other man hath done, they should not have sin,*”---in rejecting me. (John xv.)

The mission which Christ Jesus had received from his eternal Father, he communicated to his apostles. “*As my Father hath sent me, so I send you.*” (John xx.) He granted to them the commission which himself had possessed, to preach, to reform and to establish the church. And then, as in his own case, he furnished them with the means of convincing the public, that their mission, like his, was divine. He gave them

the power,—and they every where exercised it,—of performing *miracles*.

Thus, my brethren, useless as the well informed may deem it, I have shewn you that a *mission*, and a well attested mission, is necessary in order to perform the functions of the sacred ministry. The two-fold proposition is indeed so plain, that hardly among those whose interest it is to deny it, is there an individual so bold as to call it into question. “*No one can preach unless he be sent.*” (Rom. x.) “*No one taketh to himself the honor (of priesthood) but he that is called of God, as Aaron was.*” (Heb. v.) Accordingly, the protestants have the candor to allow all this,—to allow the necessity of a mission; and to admit the necessity also of its evidence. You may find the acknowledgment of these truths in the works of nearly all who have treated the interesting subject. In the twenty-third of the thirty-nine articles, it is said,—“*it is not lawful for any man to take upon himself the office of teaching, or ministering the sacraments, in the congregation, before he is lawfully called and sent to execute the same.*” Luther, the pretended apostle of the pretended reformation, in particular, very fiercely urges, on different occasions, both the necessity of a mission in order to teach, and the necessity of its evidence. On the occasions, when Carlostadius and Muncer undertook to reform his reformation, indignant at what he terms “*their insolence and impiety,*” he calls out,—“*and whence did they receive their mission? By what*



*delegation do they exercise their authority? Who gave him—addressing Muncer—the power to teach? If he say God, let him then prove it, by a manifest miracle: for it is by manifest miracles that God declares himself, when he wills to change the ordinary form of mission.”*

After the above explanations of the nature and necessity of a mission, it is almost superfluous to remark to you, that the mission which Christ Jesus imparted to his apostles, was destined to be perpetual; to continue through the lapse of each succeeding generation, such as it was in its first origin and institution,—supernatural and divine. “*Behold I am with you,*” says Christ, “*till the end of the world.*” And he could be with them “till the end of the world,” only by the perpetuity and continuance of the mission, which he had conferred upon them. As the church is perpetual, so consequently is the mission of its pastors. Essentially connected together, they must consequently co-exist together. Hence, was the first use which the apostles made of their newly delegated power, to chuse for themselves fellow labourers in the sacred vineyard, and to provide successors. They associated Saint Matthias into the apostolic college; they imposed their hands upon the seven deacons; they ordained bishops to govern the churches which they had founded at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Alexandria, &c.:—thus beginning the formation of a chain that will reach to the end of time. “*Christ Jesus,*” says St. Clement, the disciple of the

apostles, "*received his mission from God. The apostles received their mission from Christ. And after having received the Holy Ghost and preached the gospel, they established bishops and deacons, to whom they communicated the charge, which themselves had received from God. They established a rule of succession for futurity; in order that in each age, at the deaths of its pastors, their office and ministry might be regularly handed down to others.* (Ep. I.) This doctrine of Clement is that of all the holy fathers and writers, who have spoken on the subject of a *mission*. Like Clement, they all teach that the mission imparted by Christ to his apostles was destined to be perennial; and that to participate of it, it is essential to have received and inherited it, in a direct order of succession, from those who had received and inherited it from the apostles. Indeed, this doctrine is admitted and taught by a multitude of the most learned protestants; by many of our own countrymen in particular; and even by Luther himself. "*God,*" says the great reformer, "*does not now call men into the ministry, immediately by himself. He has established a vocation, which has lasted till our times; and shall last till the end of the world, in the regular succession of pastors.*" (In Ep. ad. Gal.) It is this regular succession of pastors, that the protestants, as we do, denominate an *ordinary mission*. It is preserved, I need not add, by the sacrament of ordination; as it is *known* by the publicity of canonical institution.

I have, therefore, my brethren, after having laid down this series of principles, only to make their ap-

plication; and to shew you the conclusions which their application presents. From them, there result these plain and obvious truths;---that to preach and perform the functions of the sacred ministry, demands *a mission*: and that this mission must either be *ordinary*, that is, canonically inherited by succession from the apostles;---or *extraordinary*, imparted immediately by God to an individual, and attested by the evidence of miracles. Retain well the recollection of these maxims, and apply them with me to the case of protestantism.

Luther, I have frequently shewn you, was the great author of the protestant religion, its founder and its apostle. The church, he contended, was deeply immersed in errors. He quitted its society; preached new doctrines; and established a new dispensation.---To do all this, you feel, from the principles just inculcated, ---*a mission* was indispensably requisite. Without it, Luther was an intruder; and protestantism is a baseless fabric. It is on the divinity of the mission of the apostles of protestantism, that the divinity of protestantism reposes, if protestantism be divine.

And whence did Luther derive his mission? (I am alluding now to an *ordinary mission*.) From what source did it flow; through what medium did he derive it? My brethren, when I ask these questions, my imagination is perplexed; and I pause to think, what objects I shall interrogate in order to find it out. Was it---for this is the ordinary medium of the ordinary



mission,—was it through the medium of the catholic church? This, indeed, is one of the systems by which one class of protestants, and a considerable class too, has endeavoured to defend the mission of the reformers. But see, in the first instance, the immediate consequence which this system pre-supposes; and which if the protestant would reason consistently, is at once the refutation of the protestant claims to an apostolic mission. If it be pretended, that it was from the catholic church that Luther and his fellow-reformers received their mission, then it must necessarily be allowed, that of course, the catholic church was the heir and possessor of the apostolic mission; therefore vested with apostolic powers;—and being vested with apostolic powers; therefore the apostolic church;—and again, if the apostolic church; therefore the true church. Thus is the system, that is supposed best to prove the mission of Luther and his associates, the proof only of the mission of the pastors of the catholic church. This consequence has been noticed by several protestants. Doctor Daubeney notices it, where he says,—“*the characteristical mark which distinguishes any society is its appropriate government. Where the form of government is to be found, that was originally established by the apostles, there the church of Christ, as a visible society, exists.*”

However, to proceed:—the mission of Luther and his co-apostles, it is said, was derived from the catholic church. Behold then, some further consequences,

plain as those which I have been just deducing. If it were from the catholic church that these men derived their mission, then is it true, that the catholic church conferred a mission upon the men, whom, at the same time, she excommunicated; whom she declared heretics; and expelled from her society:—true, that she conferred a mission upon them too to destroy her altars; to despoil her clergy; to insult her doctrines; to vilify her piety. Who does not feel the absurdity of such a mission, imparted by such a church, upon such men, for the performance of such offices? Is not the conclusion much more obvious, that since the church excommunicated them, so far from bestowing, she took from them all the missionary powers, with which hitherto they had been invested? Certainly, such conclusion is much more logical, than its opposite. Or, if indeed, it must still be contended, that Luther and his companions received their mission from the parent church, let ingenuity tell me, why every heresiarch likewise that has at any period revolted against her,—why they did not equally retain, or acquire a mission from her—Arius, or Nestorius, or Pelagius, or ——? Their claims, if not better, are good at least, as those of the reformers: and I defy all the artifices of ingenuity to prove, that the mission of the reformers is apostolical, if that of the above heresiarchs be not.

But here, my brethren, an argument presents itself furnished by the protestants themselves, which entirely does away the protestant claims to any mission through

the medium of the ancient church. It is a maxim, which not only the ancient fathers inculcate, but which reason and good sense approve,—that an heretical church, and still more an idolatrous church, can possess no mission. Nothing is so irreconcilable, as the crime of idolatry with the divinity of a mission.--- Now, my brethren, I have shewn you frequently, in the series of my discourses, that it was a common assertion of the reformers, as it is yet the language of a host of protestants, that the catholic church at the period of the reformation, and for ages long previous to it, was deeply sunk in heresy and infidelity, in idolatry and superstition. She was, according to Luther and his associates, and according to our modern protestant theologians, “the synagogue of Satan; the whore of Babylon; the seat of Antichrist.” What, therefore, if such were indeed her situation, what so plain, as that she could give no mission? What so plain, as that she possessed no mission.? What so absurd, as to pretend to possess a mission from her? Certainly, if what the protestant asserts respecting the state of the catholic church be true, it is worse than preposterous to affect to lay claim to a mission through such medium. I could even quote the authority of several learned reformers, who sensible of the folly of the claim, have treated it with ridicule. “*It is wrong,*” says Beza to Alemannus, “*to claim a mission from the popish church. She possessed none; and therefore could give none.*”



But, might not Luther possibly have derived his mission from the *people*; that is, from the proselytes, who admiring his doctrines, revered him also as their pastor? To your good sense it will appear almost offensive, unless you be acquainted with the history of human errors, to propose so singular a question. Well, my brethren, and yet is this another system, by which a considerable portion of the protestant society, persuaded of the necessity of a mission, but persuaded that the catholic church did not grant it, has endeavoured to account for the authority of the protestant ministry. The argument has the merit,—if such thing be a merit in spiritual things,—of novelty; and it has the merit too of being consonant to the bold and daring principles of the reformation. The mission of Luther, it is said, was derived *from the people*. But, did the people inherit and possess a mission? If they did not, according to the argument which I just cited from Beza, then they could confer no mission. Are the people the heirs and the successors of the apostles: for it was to the apostles, and to their successors only, that the mission was imparted by our Redeemer? If they be not, they could consequently communicate no mission to the great reformer. Are the people the ministers of holy things; the dispensers of the mysteries; and the organs of the doctrines of religion,—for all this is included in the nature and import of a mission? If not, therefore could they not bestow any mission on the innovator. But why do I ask these

useless questions? Is it not obvious to whoever superficially reflects on the nature of the priesthood, and on the character of the priestly functions, that these are not the property and province of the people; and not being their property and province, they consequently have no power to confer them? The people are the sources of civil, not of spiritual power. But, behold the proof, if even these reflections were illusive, that it was not from the people, that Luther derived, or imagined that he could derive, his pretended mission. It is a fact, that he neither solicited, nor consulted the people, about the circumstance; neither appealed, nor applied to them for their election, their delegation, or their sanction. He preached, before the Lutherans existed. He preached; and he told the people, that he had received the diploma of his mission "*immediately from the hand of Christ.*" "*I am sure,*" he says, "*that Christ has named me, and considers me as his envoy.*" (Adv. Fals. Nom. Ord. Ep.) In short, my brethren, this is certain:---Luther did not wait to receive a mission from the people.

In this country, and among the clergy of the English establishment, the system by which they attempt to explain the apostolicity of their mission, is different from both of the preceding systems. The ordinary basis, appendage, and recommendation of a mission are *episcopacy, and holy orders*. Our clergy revere and as they contend, retain episcopacy and holy orders. Their episcopacy and holy orders, they equally con-

tend, are apostolical,—the same principles of spiritual power which Christ communicated to the apostles; which the apostles communicated to their successors; and which their successors, in regular order, have through each revolving age transferred, unvitiated, to each other. It is thus, they boast, that linked to the age of the apostles, their ministry is apostolical; and they are the heirs of the functions, of the powers, and prerogatives of the apostles. This was often the fond theme of exultation to the great and venerable Archbishop Laud. “*By virtue of episcopacy,*” he used to say, “*the bishops of England derive their succession and mission from St. Peter.*” It is equally the subject of triumph to many other distinguished protestant writers. Speaking of the ordination of the protestant clergy in this country, and of the consequent reality of their mission, the learned Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Tomline) observes, that, “*when the reformation took place in England, the bishops and clergy were not consecrated and ordained again. They had received consecration and ordination from men, who had PUBLIC AUTHORITY given them in the congregation, for that purpose; and to whom the power of consecrating and ordaining had been transmitted from the APOSTLES: and THAT POWER WAS NOT VITIATED.*” (Elements of Theology.)

Before I present to you, my brethren, the direct answer to the above pretensions of our protestant countrymen, let me make one general reflection on them,



—a reflection, which without refuting, should be to the protestant a strong motive for suspecting them.—It is this, that if the English church be apostolical, and its pastors possess a mission, only because they have retained the sacred order of episcopacy and that of priesthood, through the medium of the ancient catholic pastors,—if this be true, it follows evidently, that then all the other protestant churches and religions which have not retained these institutions, are not apostolical; and that their pastors possess no mission. It is episcopacy and holy order, according to the reasoning of the English protestant, regularly descending from the apostles, that confer a mission; *therefore*, where there is no episcopacy nor holy order thus transmitted, there is consequently no mission. The deduction is incontestible, if the premises be true. And what is the ulterior consequence? Why, that then nearly all the protestant churches and religions; the churches and religions of the chief apostles of the reformation, of Luther, Calvin, &c.; the protestant churches and religions of France, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, &c. are no churches, or religions whatever. These—all these—neither retain episcopacy, nor the ancient rite of ordination. They reject both. The consequence is, if our English brethren reason accurately, that they are mere human fabrics, cumbering the ground upon which they are placed; their pastors without mission; and their congregation without pastors. How dreadfully severe is

the condemnation, and how cruel the reproach, which thus the smaller portion of the protestant community is pleased bodily to pass upon the larger; and upon an equally respectable body of that society!\*

Let me likewise, before I give my own reply to the system, by which our protestant countrymen account, as they imagine, for the reality of the mission of their clergy, let me give you the opinion which many other protestants, wise as our own countrymen, have entertained of it. I love to see protestants opposed to protestant; and the apostles above all of protestantism, I love to see mutually refute each other. Whilst their mutual refutations serve always to prove, how little reliance should be placed in the pretended inspiration of such men; it serves also frequently to render our interference unnecessary.—Indeed, there is not one single protestant system defended by one class of protestants, which may not be refuted by the authority of another class.

\* According to the opinion of our English clergy, the clergy of all, or nearly all, the reformed churches, are mere laymen. "*Where there is no episcopal ordination,*" says Dodwell, "*there is no ministry; no sacrament; no church. Men are out of the covenant of grace, and hope of salvation.*"—"And" says Dr. Bridges (Bishop of Oxford) "*if our brethren will make the catholic pastors mere laymen, then are neither they nor we any ministers at all; but mere laymen also. For, who ordained us ministers, but such ministers as were either themselves of the ministry; or, at least, were made ministers of those ministers?*"—Defence of Government.

In regard then to the sacred order of episcopacy descending in regular succession from the apostles, which the protestants of this country consider as the basis of the mission of their clergy,—behold, what the author of the reformation, Luther, has said respecting it.\* In a Bull, which he published in the year 1523, he says, “*Now listen O bishops, you masks of Satan! Doctor Luther will read to you a Bull, that will not please you.*”---THE BULL AND REFORMATION OF DOCTOR LUTHER. ---*Whoever assists; whoever sacrifices his life and honor in the destruction of bishoprics, and in the extinction of episcopal government, that man is the beloved child of God, and a true christian, &c. Or, if he cannot do this, let him at least condemn and avoid such government. Whoever maintains the government of bishops, and obeys them voluntarily, is the minister of the devil, and resists the ordinances of God.*”---Without any commentary upon the singular instrument, and on its decided contradiction of the opinions of our established clergy, let me subjoin to it, as an authority almost equally imposing, the sentiments of the apostle Beza. “*What then! shall any man be so absurd as to imagine, that popish ordinations are valid? No, they are nothing but the infamous commerce of Romish whoredom; and more defiled than the recom-*

\* Anno Domini MDXXIII. Nunc attendite, vos Episcopi, imo larvæ Diaboli; Doctor Lutherus vult vobis Bullam et Reformationem legere, quæ vobis non bene sonabit.—*Doctoris Lutheri Bulla et Reformatio, &c.*



*pense of whores. The men whom the grace of God has changed, cannot detest popery, without abjuring the popish ordinations which they have received. I do not deny, that they may make good pastors; but it must be, when they have been ordained anew: so that from false bishops, they become lawful pastors," &c.* To these two great and venerable authorities, I might add many others. But suffice it to say, that the whole body of the Calvinistic sects, and the far greater part of all the other reformed religions, think on these subjects with Luther and Beza. They reject every claim to mission, as derived from the order and power of the ancient episcopacy and ancient clergy; and accordingly ordain, that on the occasion when any of the catholic clergy become proselytes to their institutions, they shall receive a new consecration. Such, and so small, is the esteem, which the far greater part of the protestant church entertains for the system, which in this nation is considered as the divine foundation of its establishment!

There is another consideration also, which before I make the immediate reply to the point which we are now discussing, might with propriety be weighed, as an important preliminary to it. The mission of the English clergy, it is pretended, is apostolical, because through the medium of ordination, and their succession to a lawful ministry, they have inherited the power, which their catholic predecessors had inherited from the apostles. Well, my brethren, but where is

the force of this argument, if it be a fact, that the protestant clergy of this nation have not even retained the institution of ordination; or that their ordination is invalid? If either of these circumstances be true, it is true also, that the argument by which they so triumphantly defend the apostolicity of their mission, is futile: and the fabric of their church, which they assert, reposes on the "apostolic rock," reposes on a bed of sand. I will not however enter, on this occasion, on the discussion of this momentous question. I will only now say, that at all events, the motives for calling in question the reality and validity of protestant ordinations are various and forcible,—so forcible, that several well instructed protestants have not only doubted, but denied them. "*The bishops themselves*," says Neal, (it was during the reign of Elizabeth) "*were uneasy; and began to doubt of the validity of their ordinations.*"—There is even a large portion of our clergy, and the warm defenders likewise of the English church, who, because either sensible of the invalidity of its ordinations, or convinced of the impossibility of proving their validity, adopted, like the reforms of the continent, the bold but consistent method of denying at once the necessity of all ordinations derived from the parent church; and even of ridiculing them as profane. "*I would not have you think*," says the acute Whitaker, "*that we so esteem your orders, as to conceive, that our vocation is null without them.*" (Contra Daræum.) "*You much deceive yourselves*," says Fulk, "*if you*

*think we esteem your offices of bishops, priests and deacons, any beller than laymen.*" "No," he adds in his Retentive, "*we defy, abhor and detest your greasy antichristian orders.*" In reality, let who may, only candidly discuss the *facts*, which are said to attest the consecration of the first protestant prelates; and still more, *the forms* of their supposed consecration,---comparing these with the forms of preceding ages,---and he will own, that at best, the validity of such consecration is extremely dubious. But if, like Whitaker, Fulk, and the generality of the reformers, he will consider the maxims of the reformation, he will, like them, be compelled to own, that to place the reality of a protestant mission, upon the reality of ordinations as borrowed or descending from the catholic church, is preposterous. Why, only for one moment, recal to your recollection the leading maxims of protestantism, which I have cited so very frequently---that "the catholic church is the whore of Babylon,"---that according to the thirty-nine articles, "she has been for above eight hundred years immersed in idolatry." Recollect what, but yesterday, the pious,---not liberal,---Bishop of Durham said boldly, to his flock and to the public,---that "*we must ever hold, that the popish doctrines and usages are idolatrous, blasphemous and sacrilegious.*"---Recollect this, and appealing to reason, to decency, to consistency,---ask, if it be reasonable, decent, or consistent in the protestant to pretend to derive apostolical ordinations and an apostolical mission from such a



source? From such a source, it is evident, that nothing apostolical could flow. The whore of Babylon, or a church for above eight hundred years immersed in idolatry, certainly did not possess an apostolic mission; and consequently could not be the source of such a mission. This argument is not mine; but as I have shewn before, it is that of the wisest protestants.

The above observations are, I think, sufficient to refute the pretensions of the English clergy to an apostolical mission. Yet, they are not the direct reply to those pretensions. I come now to that reply, which also I shall endeavour to establish upon the plainest maxims of religion, and upon the principles which the theologians of this country admit.

It is a maxim, my brethren, of religion, and a principle admitted by the clergy of our legal institute,---a maxim and principle which good sense will not dispute,---that there cannot co-exist two apostolical, yet contradictory missions; two regular, yet opposite ministries. These objects, like truth, are *one*; because, like truth, they are divine. They were each of them *one* in their formation; *one* in their communication; and they were destined for ever to remain *one*. These maxims are incontestible. And what is the consequence, which results from them? Why, a consequence as incontestible, as the maxims themselves,---this:---that where there is question of two missions, or two ministries, the proof that one mission is apostolical, is the proof that the other is not apostolical;---the

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proof that one ministry is regular, is the evidence that the other is irregular. So that if it be proved, that the catholic episcopacy, and the catholic priesthood, are apostolical and regular, it is proved that the protestant episcopacy, and the protestant priesthood, are unapostolical and irregular;---and being unapostolical and irregular, are, consequently again, unvested with any mission, and uncharged with any ministry. Now, that the catholic episcopacy, and the catholic priesthood, are apostolical and regular, these are truths, which not only the established clergy of this country admit,---they are the very truths which form the basis of the system, upon which they attempt to build the fabric of their church. You have not forgotten the words, which a few moments past, I quoted from Dr. Tomline, whose opinion on this point is but similar to that of many other protestant prelates. “*When the reformation took place,*” he says “*the bishops and clergy were not consecrated and ordained again; they had received consecration and ordination from men who had* PUBLIC AUTHORITY *given them in the congregation, for that purpose; and to whom the power of consecrating and ordaining had been transmitted* FROM THE APOSTLES:---*and THAT POWER WAS NOT VITIATED.*” NOW (I could here appeal to prejudice itself) what are the manifest import and signification of the above words? The catholic pastors, it is granted, “*had public authority*” given them in the congregation; they had “*that authority transmitted from the apostles;*” and that au-

thority moreover "*was not vitiated.*" What, if words have any meaning, is this, but acknowledging the apostolicity of the catholic episcopacy, and the regularity of the catholic priesthood; and the apostolicity, of course, of the catholic mission, and the regularity of the catholic ministry? Certainly, it is acknowledging all this, in the plainest manner. And if so, according to the maxim, that "*there cannot coexist two apostolical, yet contrary missions; two regular, yet opposite ministries*"---it is acknowledging, that the mission and ministry of the English church are not apostolical.

But, if, after the above concessions, the Anglican clergy will still maintain, that the catholic church at present possesses no mission; and that *their* establishment has the blessing to enjoy that privilege; let their ingenuity explain, by what means the former lost, the latter got, its mission:---for that the former possessed a mission at the time of the reformation, is what you have seen, they acknowledge. Did she then transfer it? Did she resign it? Did she forfeit it? As for transferring or resigning it, she was so far from doing either, that on the contrary, with all the weight of her authority, she asserted and supported it. She retained her orders and consecration; her episcopacy and priesthood; with all the appendages and powers annexed, and belonging, to them. She condemned, as heretics and rebels, the men whose boldness had denied, or whose audacity had invaded them. She resigned or transferred nothing. Did she forfeit her mission?



But how; by what means; on what occasion? Did she change any maxim; alter any tenet; abandon any practice; undergo any kind of revolution?—Nothing of the nature. She remained such then, as she had always been before; and such as she is at present. And if, therefore, at the era of the reformation, she possessed a mission, she possesses that mission still. Thus, in reality,—and we thank our brethren for it,—the attempt which they make in this country to prove the apostolicity of the mission of their pastors, is the proof and illustration, not of their apostolicity, but of the apostolicity only of the pastors of the catholic church.

The evidence that one church possesses a mission, is the evidence that another wants it. Hence, having shewn you, that the apostolic mission has not departed from the catholic church, it is superfluous quite, any further to ask our protestant countrymen to explain by what methods, they still imagine their establishment can enjoy one? Is it, forsooth, because the church which did really, they own, possess a mission, declared, that their establishment possesses none; declared, that its pretensions are all illusive; suspended its pastors from every function; condemned its religions as a heresy; and reprobated its intrusion as a rebellion? The idea, that an establishment receives a mission from the church, which excommunicates it, is preposterous. Is it because its pastors received their *ordination* from the catholic church,—from pastors who had inherited a mission? But if so,—if the mere cir-

cumstance of catholic ordination conferred a mission, then would it follow, that every heresy, which has at any period revolted against the church, retaining at the same time its orders, possesses also a mission—Donatism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, &c. These heresies, in this hypothesis, with much more reason than our establishment, might lay claim to an apostolic delegation. They are linked almost to the apostolic ages. They retain in their pure and unadulterated forms (which the establishment here does not) the apostolic and ancient rites of consecration. And yet, these heresies, the protestant allows it, possess no mission from this prerogative. Therefore, I conclude, it is unwise to claim a mission upon a similar argument. It proves too much; and consequently, according to the canons of logic—nothing. But, my brethren, this argument apart; put it to your reason: is there not, again, something preposterous in the notion, that the reception of catholic orders justifies rebellion against the catholic church; or imparts a commission to dispoil her altars, and insult her tenets? With as much reason it might be contended, that protestant ordination gives the protestant a mission to condemn the protestant church:—or that the impartment of an office by a civil government, justifies a rebellion against such government. The fact is, that the circumstance of the Anglican clergy having received ordinations from the catholic church, so far from being the sanction of a protestant mission, and the justification of a rebellion

against the church, which gave them, was in truth the reverse,---was the stronger tie to revere her doctrines; to respect her authority; to obey her mandates.

I have, therefore, my brethren, discussed the chief arguments by which the defenders of protestantism have attempted to establish the *ordinary mission* of their pastors. And those arguments, you have remarked, are all of them replete with difficulties, solecisms and contradictions. The evidence of the absurdity of claiming for these men an *ordinary mission*, is even so palpable, that a multitude of very distinguished advocates of the reformation,—men who had calculated every medium and invented every artifice for its support,—have honestly acknowledged, that it is wrong and unwise thus to labour to defend it. I have already quoted to you the opinion of Beza upon this subject. “*The church*,” this apostle maintained, “*possessed no ordinary mission; consequently could confer no ordinary mission.*” This also, I have said, was the opinion of Luther, Calvin, and the great herd of their deluded, although sometimes learned, followers. These rejected all *ordinary*; and maintained an *extraordinary mission*. “*Had Luther*,” says Millius, “*had any predecessors in the sacred ministry, there would have been no room for a reformation; and it is because he had none, that this apostle was raised up BY GOD’S SPECIAL APPOINTMENT, and IN AN EXTRAORDINARY MANNER.*”\* (Divinitus, et extraordinem.) Groundless as are the

\* In Aug. Conf. Explic.



sentiments of these men respecting an *extraordinary mission*, yet are they more consistent, than the principles of those who defend an ordinary one. I wonder often, how the man who believes the thirty-nine articles, which declare, that *for eight hundred years and more, the whole world was buried in idolatry*; or who believes the equally dreadful imputations, which each day the protestant pulpit and the protestant press teem out against the ancient church,—I wonder, how any man believing these things, can possibly believe the permanency during this long frightful night, of an ordinary mission. The church, according to these imputations, had perished; therefore, must all ordinary mission have perished with it. Yes, my brethren, it is doubtlessly manifest, that if indeed the reformers had any mission, their mission was not *ordinary*, but *extraordinary*.

What is signified by an *extraordinary mission*, it would be superfluous to explain. The nature of the thing is expressed by the word itself. It is, as the word expresses, an unusual commission, imparted immediately by the Almighty to an individual, or to individuals, in order to communicate some new or important design to his creatures. And as the explanation of the nature of an extraordinary mission is superfluous, so equally superfluous would be the attempt to prove that God can impart such delegation to individuals. He has done it on several occasions; on the occasion when he substituted the Mosaic rites in room

of the primitive religion, by the agency of Moses; on the occasion when he substituted the christian law in the place of the Mosaic rites, by the deputation of Christ and his apostles. Indeed, that he can do it, and that he has done it, are truths which impiety alone has had the boldness to call in question. The consequence therefore is, that if it had pleased the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty to have imparted an extraordinary mission to Luther, or to any of the reformers, he certainly could have done it. This is a point, which I by no means design to contest.

But, it is here the place to make a very important observation, although it be an observation so natural, that it could not escape the most superficial reasoner. It is this:—that whenever it does please the wisdom and beneficence of God to grant an *extraordinary mission* to any individual, he furnishes the individual thus deputed, with some diploma or credential to prove it. He sends him, and shews the public that he sends him. Without such attestation, it would be both unwise and unreasonable to believe him. You feel, at once, the absurdity of believing a man to be the envoy of heaven, merely because he asserts it: and still more, you must feel the folly of believing new tenets, observing new laws, cultivating new practices, upon the bare testimony of such unauthenticated individual. Were it proper to receive and believe such man, then it is proper also to receive and believe every false pro-

phet;—"every wolf in the clothing of sheep;"---every enthusiast that "cries out Lord, Lord," in order to impose upon mankind. However, it is not so. Both the rules of human reason, and the maxims of eternal wisdom forbid it; ordaining, each of them, forcibly, that whenever through the medium of an extraordinary mission, God dictates new laws, and reveals new tenets to his creatures, the evidences of such mission should be manifest; and it be clear, that the laws and tenets thus communicated, are really the dictate of the divine authority. Else, whilst by the supposed injunctions of God, men are bound to receive them; by every maxim of prudence, they are bound to reject them. These principles are wise and obvious. Accordingly, if we consult experience, we find, that they are those, which on the occasions of the impartment of every extraordinary mission, have been always verified. Whenever God imparted an extraordinary mission, he always, we find by experience, recommended it by strong and striking attestations; always stamped it with the broad seal of his authority. He did so, when he deputed Moses, and the prophets;---so, when he commissioned his divine Son, and the apostles. Speaking of his own mission, our Great Redeemer says, "*if I had not done the works, which no one else hath done, they should have no sin*" in disbelieving me. (John xv.) Even the reformers themselves admit the force and certainly of these truths. Luther pressed them strongly on the reformers of his pretended reforma-



tion; and by them, strenuously combated the progress of every innovation, beyond his own. I did cite to you his conduct to Muncer and Carlostadius. When the former arrogated to himself the honor of a mission, Luther,---not now appealing to the scriptures to refute the heresiarch's doctrines, instantly exclaimed: "*if he say that God have sent him, let him prove it by a miracle; for it is by such signs that God declares himself, when he changes aught in the ordinary form of a mission.*" Thus Calvin reasoned likewise, allowing no pretended evangelist to teach new opinions in Geneva. "*Indeed,*" says our countryman, Tollandson, "*I cannot think that any pretence of conscience warrants any man that is not EXTRAORDINARILY commissioned, as the apostles and first preachers of the gospel were; and cannot justify that commission by MIRACLES, as they did,---to affront the established religion of a nation.*"---(Serm).

Having laid down these plain, but important, truths,---truths which the reformers have admitted imprudently,---we have now only to make the application of them to Luther, or to his fellow-reformers. *An extraordinary mission is a delegation imparted immediately by the Almighty to an individual, or to individuals, in order to communicate some new design to his creatures; and it bears always upon it the stamp that it is divine.* Now, it is asserted that the mission of Luther, or of his fellow-reformers, was extraordinary; therefore, should it exhibit some evidence of its divinity. Well, and what are the evidences of the extraordinary mis-

sion of these men? Alas! my brethern, what a proof am I going to display before you, of the blindness of human weakness! What an humiliating exhibition of the triumph of prejudice over reason, and of passion over piety! Never in the history of mankind did there occur an occasion, on which, to recommend a mission, more numerous attestations were required, than at the era of the reformation; and never did there occur an occasion, on which so few were exhibited. Never, since the dawn of time, did an event take place, which, to prove it the work of God, demanded a greater blaze of evidence; and never did an event take place, in which the absence of every kind of evidence was more palpable. The christian world, until Luther began to preach, was at peace: the faithful secure, "*each under the shade of his own vine or fig tree,*" lived in the calm enjoyment of a religion, which they piously believed had descended to them unimpaired from the hands of the the apostles;—the pastors of the church in quiet possession, like the faithful, not only of the same religious creed, but also of a very ample property, the gift of piety and the endowment of the state. COMES, *an obscure individual*;—announces himself the extraordinary envoy of heaven; declares that he is empowered to alter the whole system of religion; to change its laws; to set aside its usages; to expel its ministry, and to seize upon its property! My brethren, although what I here repeat, is but part of the prerogatives included in his pretended mission, yet you feel;—even

the prejudices of the protestant must feel it;—on such occasion and under such circumstances, it was the duty of the public to have paused before they believed him. It was their duty, as it was the dictate of common sense, to have demanded his diploma; to have asked some voucher of so wonderful a commission. For example, if I, or any other person, under the pretext of an extraordinary mission, were to undertake to change the established religion of this country,—altering by the change nearly every tenet, that its members now believe; and transferring the property of its clergy into other hands,—were I to undertake to do this, where is the man possessed of common sense, that would, without any voucher but my own word, believe me? Certainly not one. Or if any did believe me, it could be only the enthusiast, the fanatic, or the madman. As well might I be believed, if I were to assert, that the property of the state, or the estate of any individual, is mine: and as well might the surrender of either be made, on the claim of my daring insolence.

And what then, (it is time to return an answer to the question) what was the voucher which Luther or any other reformer presented to prove the supposed divinity of his mission? Did Luther, did any one of his associates, perform any miracles? Did they give hearing to the deaf; light to the blind; health to the sick? Did they prophecy? Did they exhibit one solitary, forcible evidence, that their commission was the



grant of heaven? My brethren, profane almost as is the quotation in this holy place,—I will tell you what Erasmus, the eye-witness and observer of the reformation, says respecting the miraculous powers of the reformers. “*As for miracles, they performed none. Not even have they been able to cure so much as a lame horse.*” The Calvinists of the Palatinate reproach Luther with never having performed any miracle to prove his mission. In short, for it is needless to dwell upon this part of my subject, it is certain that the reformers, all of them, wanted the usual credential—miracles, to attest their mission. They did not, modest men! even pretend to lay claim to miracles.

And then too, my brethren, just as they wanted the credential which *proves* an extraordinary mission, just so, I have shewn you in my discourse on the holiness of the church, they wanted also the qualifications which are essential to *recommend* it. There is nothing, I have shewn you, in the severity of their lives; in the purity of their conduct; in the sanctity of their maxims, that would seem to render them the fit instruments of so great a blessing. Referring merely to the portraits which they have given of themselves, and of each other, they were, we have seen, not only not fit instruments of such a blessing; they were completely unfit. They were unfit, doubtlessly, if immorality, if disorder, if intemperance, if violence, if profaneness, if impiety, be circumstances which disqualify men for the functions of apostles. These vices, it is notorious,

were those of Luther, and of the chief part of his fellow labourers.

But, what then you perhaps will ask me, was the voucher which these men presented to attest their mission; what the powerful, persuasive, magic influencer, which commanding the public credulity, induced such multitudes to believe that their delegation was divine? My brethren, admire here, and weep over the wonderful infatuation:—THEIR OWN WORD! Let me repeat it, THEIR OWN WORD ALONE! However, see the secret, that explains the apparent mystery. It was by their own word, it is true; but it was by their word, enforced by violence, and set off by insults; by their word, preaching doctrines that were gratifying to the passions, and pleasing to sensuality; by their word, animating the people to insubordination, and sanctifying their excesses; by their word, falsifying the truth and misrepresenting error. Alas! the orator of disorder; the advocate of licentiousness—the rebel—will always find hearers to admire, and admirers to follow him. “The rebel,” I have said it before, “is always a saint with the vulgar.” Where consequently, is the room for wonder, that *the word alone* of Luther and his associates, thus recommended and thus exerted, should have served as a sufficient diploma for their mission. In reality, they had no other. I defy the ingenuity of the most ingenious, to produce any other external voucher to establish it. Or if indeed, they did perform any kind of miracle, it was this:—that *without*

any miracle, they induced a numberless multitude of men to believe them. However, my brethren, this truth is manifest, that the claims of the first reformers to an *extraordinary mission* are nugatory and vain; too unsubstantial, like the protestant claims to an *ordinary mission*, to create, when they are well considered, even the illusions of a flattering vision. Again, therefore, let me say to you;—pity the weakness of credulity:—pity in your protestant brethren the credulity, which in respect to the authors of their religion, despises every established rule of precedent, and sets aside every maxim of prudence:—which believes without a reason, what it demands the strongest reasons to suspect; and disbelieves without a cause, what only the strongest evidence should prompt him to discredit. But you know it: Christ has said, “*it is necessary that heresies should come.*” (1 Cor. xi.) You know it: passion has more worshippers than piety; folly more admirers than wisdom.

IV. There remains now but one other object to be discussed, in order to complete the divisions of my discourse, and to unfold the nature of the claims of protestantism to the characteristic of apostolicity. That object is *the doctrines of protestantism*; which to be true, must essentially be *apostolical*; must be those, which delivered by Christ Jesus to the apostles, were by the apostles delivered to their successors, to be the rule and the guide of the faithful to the end of time. The necessity of the *apostolicity of doctrine* is one of



those obvious things which the protestant very readily concedes. It cannot be contested by any believer in revelation.

To ascertain the protestant claims *to apostolicity of doctrine*, is not a difficult question. To do it, we need only compare their tenets with the tenets of those ages, in which the streams of truth are owned to have been uncorrupted. In a variety of instances, we may do it by a still more easy process; by the mere appeal to the instincts of reason; verifying what these tenets are; and asking our reason, if they be consonant to those maxims which the hand of divine wisdom has inprinted upon the heart. I did indeed lay it down, as an essential attribute of the true religion, that whatever in it is necessarily apostolical, should, through the lapse of revolving ages, have been regularly preserved and perpetuated. This is certainly included in the notion of apostolicity; and this, consequently, is a point which prudence should examine. However, to this kind of apostolicity, in relation to its doctrines, protestantism surely will not (as it cannot) alledge a claim. The whole christian universe, I have repeatedly observed to you, was, according to the best protestant authorities, for above eight hundred years, immersed in the dark shades of idolatry. The consequence must be, that during this long night of error, the doctrines of the apostles were forgotten; and the further consequence must be, that therefore protestantism has no claim to apostolicity, on the score of the perpetuity of its doc-

trines from the age of the apostles. The concession of this long and universal corruption of the church, is the honest resignation of all title to apostolicity, in this important acceptation of the attribute. It is true, that this concession is not made by the *whole* school of protestantism. Sensible of its impropriety, and convinced that the doctrines of truth are perennial, there have been, and are, many protestants, who have contended, and yet contend, that the protestant code of faith has been perpetuated from the age of the apostles. These men are they who pretend to trace its perpetuity through the medium of the Albigenses, Vaudois, Hus-sites, &c. Well, my brethren, need I again demonstrate to you the illusion of this artifice? Illusive it is, certainly; and I will not do it. Remember only, that in the first place, the doctrines of the Albigenses, Vaudois, &c. were not similar to those of protestantism: and remember next, that the most early of those heretics did not exist before the twelfth or thirteenth century. The consequence is, that in regard of doctrines, they are not the predecessors of the protestant; and in regard of duration, they would not,—were they the predecessors,—give a title to apostolicity.

But I have said, that one of the methods to ascertain the claims of protestantism to apostolicity of doctrine, is to compare its tenets with the tenets of those ages, in which the streams of truth were not corrupted. The method is obviously wise; whilst also it is easy. Now, happily, we have the codes of faith of

the early ages; of those ages, when the protestants in general, allow, that no error had yet impaired the depositum of revelation. We have the decisions and canons of the early councils; the order and regulation of the early liturgies. Here is a criterion to direct the judgment. And do the codes of faith of these ages; do the decisions and canons of these councils; do the order and regulations of these liturgies, resemble the codes of faith, the decisions and canons, the order and regulations of the liturgies of protestantism? Is there aught in them, that conveys the idea that the religion of those periods bore any resemblance to any one of the religions of protestantism? My brethren, before I make a reply to these questions, it is proper that I suggest this distinction:---that among the doctrines of protestantism there are some, which it believes in common with the catholic church; others which are peculiar to itself,---the distinctive features which mark its difference from the parent institute; and the difference, at the same time, of its various sects among themselves. As for the former class of doctrines, which the protestant believes in common with the catholic, these are certainly apostolical,---having, by the guardian of every thing apostolical, been preserved and carefully transmitted through each age, to the age in which we live. However, these are not what constitute protestantism. It is the latter class of doctrines which properly constitute it; ---the peculiar doctrines which distinguish it from catholicity.



And what is the character of these doctrines? Are they similar to the codes of faith of the early ages? Do they accord with the decisions and canons of the early councils? Do they agree with the order and regulations of the early liturgies? Important questions! and which from their importance, you may perhaps imagine, require long discussions for their replies. My brethren, No, they are neither similar, nor do they accord with any of the above objects. They are totally dissimilar to them; and in contradiction to nearly every thing that antiquity was wont to venerate. It needs no process of discussion to shew this. The learning and candor, I have elsewhere noticed it, of a multitude of leading protestants admit it; treating as downright popery the doctrines of the early ages, and deriding councils, canons, fathers with the grossest insult. This is the language of Luther, Beza, Calvin, Whitaker, &c. "*What constitutes a protestant of fashion,*" says Warburton in his Julian, "*is a contempt of the farthers.*" "*And,*" says Peter Martyr, "*so long as men will urge the authority of farthers and councils, so long must they remain in error.*" In short, the thing is plain: between the protestant doctrines, and the doctrines of the early ages, there is hardly a feature of resemblance. It is hence, that Doctor Priestley very justly remarks, "*the reformers could never get clear of the great difficulty and embarrassment, respecting the doctrines of the early ages, till they boldly declared, that it was not from the fathers and antiquity,*

*that the truth of doctrines was to be decided; BUT FROM THE BIBLE ONLY."*

Another method, I have said, of ascertaining the claims of protestantism to *apostolicity of doctrine*, is to trace its tenets, and merely to ask the instincts of reason, if they possibly can imagine, that such tenets were those of the first apostles of christianity? I will not dwell upon this part of my subject, because it is a part which I have discussed already. But, my brethren, just recollecting the short sketch, which in my discourse on the church's holiness, I gave you, of the tenets of Luther, Calvin, and their co-apostles, ask your good sense, if it can suppose that such principles are apostolic? Their principles, I then shewed you, are, if aught be profane, immoral, impious;—are profane, immoral, impious, in a degree the most disgusting; insulting the divinity; annihilating virtue; and laying open the path to every criminal gratification. To know that they are not apostolical, it is only required to hear them repeated.

But, may it not be said, as in fact it is said, that some of the creeds of protestantism are apostolical, because, although they do not accord with the creed of the fathers, they accord at least with that, which the apostles themselves believed and inculcated to mankind? Specious evasion! and calculated, could it be speciously defended, to stay the fears of the timid protestant, who studies his religion in one only of its multifarious bearings. Some of the creeds of protes-

tantism are apostolical, because, it is contended, they are similar to those which were taught by the apostles! Here let me, in the first place, remark, that at all events, this argument can apply only *to one* of the creeds of protestantism: because truth being *one*,—*one creed only* can be apostolical. And which, I ask the protestant, is the protestant creed, to which the happy claim of apostolicity belongs? To which, with decency, he can refer me: or on which, with prudent and calm security, can he place his own hopes of salvation? The protestant creeds are numberless. We have nearly a hundred creeds in this little nation.—They are numberless; and of course, at variance with each other. What the Lutheran reveres, as apostolical, the Calvinist condemns as unapostolical. What the Calvinist adores as true, the Anabaptist derides as false. What in England is venerated as divine, in Scotland is reprobated as profane. Now, if even it were to be admitted, that one of the countless creeds be apostolical,—tell me, to which would prudence and good sense refer me? Not, surely, to the creed of Luther, nor that to of Calvin. These are such, I have demonstrated, that every virtuous man must view them with indignation. To the creed of the thirty-nine articles? But, this is considered as unapostolical by every protestant country but our own; and by the far larger portion of our own, it is rejected and disbelieved;—disbelieved even by the greater share of the men, who are luxuriously rewarded for subscribing it. To



the creed of the Anabaptist; or to that of the Arminian? But, the creeds of these believers are made up of the tenets principally of Calvin; blended with a few peculiar tenets, to exalt enthusiasm, and to please the vulgar. To the creed of the Methodist; of the Quaker; of the Moravian; of the Swedenburgian; of the Jumper; of the Muggletonian? Ah! piety, how thou weepst; and learning how thou lamentest, that reason should be the dupe to the illusions of such nonsense,—the cant of hypocrisy to seduce the simple, the rant of enthusiasm to inflame the fanatic! The creeds of all these believers, and of the copious hosts of other believers who resemble them, have so little pretensions to the claim of apostolicity, that—save for mere curiosity—no wise or learned protestant would even think of investigating them. They are not certainly apostolical.\* Thus, appealing to the opinions of protestants themselves, respecting the creeds of protestantism, it is impossible, prudently to consider any one of them as apostolical; because there is not one, which, by the

\* It would be a study well deserving the attention of the protestant, to trace the history of the arts and artifices, to which he, in general, if not always, owes his creeds. They are the creatures, some of them, of fanaticism; some of them, of passion; some of them, of avarice; many of them, of policy. The Centuriators, Zuinglius, &c. complain, that even the civil magistrates did frequently compel the reforming pastors to accept from them their forms of faith. Indeed, was not this the case in this country?—Did not the will of our princes,—the will of a woman chiefly,—dictate the form of faith which it now professes?

infinitely largest portion of the protestant community is not condemned as *unapostolical*.\*

Therefore, my brethren, I have conducted your reason through the consideration of the objects, which at the opening of my discourses, I had said, are necessary to constitute, or to enter into, the apostolicity of the church. And I have also shewn you the arguments,—answering them at the same time,—by which the

\* Let the English protestant only compare together the two liturgies, which at different epochs the establishment of this country has adopted; and let him, if he can, decide, which with prudence he should consider apostolical? In the liturgy of Edward the Sixth, are retained for the communion service, the words *mass and sacrifice*; and in its celebration, are recommended to be used, *the altar vestments*, and all the ornaments employed by catholics. It allows communion *in one kind*, in case of necessity; and *reservation of the sacred elements*. It recommends triple mersions; chrism; oils; commemorations of the Blessed Virgin Mary, holy patriarchs, &c.; invocation of angels prayers for the dead; extreme unction; crossings, &c. “*This liturgy was composed by the Archbishop of Canterbury*,” says the statute which enacts it, “*and certain of the most learned and discreet bishops, and other learned men of this realm, having, as well eye and respect to the most sincere and pure christian religion taught in the Scripture, as to the primitive church*.” In short, it is declared to be apostolical, “*being made by the aid of the Holy Ghost*.”

In the liturgy of Elizabeth, all the objects which I have named, as recommended in the liturgy of Edward, are either omitted, or condemned. And yet the liturgy of Elizabeth is, like that of Edward, declared to be composed “*by the aid of the Holy Ghost*,”—to be *apostolical*! Which, with prudence, can the protestant believe?

protestant attempts to defend his claims to that sacred characteristic. What is the conclusion which your wisdom has deduced? You beheld the duration of the protestant institutions, reaching only from yesterday. You saw the pretended mission of its pastors, reposing only upon usurpation. You contemplated the features of its doctrines, consisting principally of errors.—Therefore you concluded, that if that alone be apostolical, which has descended from the apostles, and which the apostles established,—the claims which protestantism presents to apostolicity are groundless. Yes, my beloved friends, if the heart were not the arbiter of more decisions, than the understanding; if prejudice and partiality were not greater influencers of opinion, than wisdom,—it is thus too, that the protestant would conclude. He would conclude thus, did he only follow the definitions, which his own incautious candor has suggested.

Speaking of the reformers and their reformation, (changing only the names) how correctly might I say of them, what St. Austin says of the heresiarchs and heresies of his time. *“If the church, at the era of the reformation, did not exist, whence then did Luther and Calvin come! From what sea did they emerge? From what cloud did they descend? Let their abettors only consider well, where they are at present; since they are unable to inform us, whence they came.”* “Tell me,” he adds in another place, *“whether the church had perished? If it had, then what church begot Luther*



*and the reformers? But if it had not perished, tell me likewise, was it not madness in any one to abandon it?"* My brethren, the comparison may seem in this place profane;—but, whoever conversant in ancient fable, considers the situation of the reformers, will own, that they very strikingly resemble the men of Deucalion,—a race without parents; a progeny without predecessors.

How important should it appear to the protestant,—as alas! it is indeed very seriously important,—to appreciate well the nature of his situation; the principles of his faith; the foundations of his hope. It is not in the society of any communion, in which chance or choice may place them, that men can rationally expect salvation. It is in that only, which planned by the divine wisdom, was planted by the apostles.—Let the protestant, at least apprehensive that his own is not of this description, seek piously that which is.—Seeking it piously, he will assuredly find it. Having found it, provided he have the fortitude to embrace it, he will find it at the same time the asylum of peace; and a rock upon which, even amid storms, he may repose, securely.



## SERMON VIII.

### ON THE APOSTOLICITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

*And Jesus said to Simon, fear not; for from henceforth, thou shalt be a fisher of men.*—St. Luke, v. 10.

IN my last discourse, illustrating the words of my text, I shewed you, how accurately Simon corresponded with the figure, and fulfilled the appellation which is here given to him by our Redeemer, of “*a fisher of men;*” when casting into the sea of life the net of the divine word, he drew into the bark of the church so great a multitude of its inhabitants. But, I might have remarked to you, that it is not to Simon alone, that the figure and the appellation may be applied. They may be applied, with as much propriety, and they often are applied, to the rest of the apostles. Like Simon the apostles were all of them “*fishers of men;*” and like him, they all realized the full import of the figure, and the bearings of the name.

We have in the call of the apostles to the sacred ministry, a strong proof of the omnipotence of grace;



as in the successes which attended their call, we have an equally forcible proof of the divinity of the christian institute. You know what the apostles were, before the occasion of their call:—men weak and pusillanimous; uninstructed and ignorant;—so weak and pusillanimous, as to shrink from every danger; and so uninstructed and ignorant, as hardly to comprehend the first rudiments of religious knowledge. *They are called:*—and behold, instantly, they become bold and intrepid; learned and wise. So far from being now scared with the mere shadows of danger, as they were before; so far from being scared with danger, even in its most frightful attitudes,—they, on the contrary, court it; and exult in the sufferings which the heaviest tribulation brings. And as for ignorance, so far from being the dupes to its illusions, they now astonish the universe with their wisdom; and confound by their learning, the proud schools of profane philosophy.

And see the successes, with which they perform the functions of their new vocation! Christ Jesus, I have said, had called them "*the fishers of men:*" he had told them to "*go and preach the gospel to every creature:*" assuring them, at the same time, that "*all power was given to him in heaven, and on earth;*" and that "*himself would be always with them.*" Animated by this commission, and these assurances; and fired too with the love of God and an ardent charity for men, these heroic victims of benevolence did "*go forth and preach.*" *They preached;* and although the

world with all its passions, prejudices and superstitions was leagued against them;—although the doctrines, which they preached, were repugnant to all the bad propensities of the heart, and exceeded far the measure of the human understanding,—yet did an immense portion of the public; of the corrupted and the vicious; of the learned and the enlightened, hear them, and believe. *They preached*; and the love of vice was converted into the zeal for innocence; prejudice into the desire of truth; superstition into the warmth of piety. Vice itself was exalted into the heroism of sanctity; and every defilement done away, which corruption had introduced into the sanctuary of the heart. *They preached*; and Satan, like a thunderbolt, was hurled from his throne; his temples razed; his altars overturned; and idolatry abashed and trembling, fled from those scenes, which it had so long disgraced by its follies, and infected by its abominations. *They preached*: and the universe was changed. The spectacle which they exhibited was new;—the spectacle of exalted virtue, and consummate wisdom. Men beheld the virtue; and it edified them: they listened to the wisdom, and it convinced them. In this manner, did the first apostles of Jesus Christ completely realize the figure of the “*fishers of men*,” completely verify the assurance which their divine Master had given them, that “*himself would be always with them*,” completely illustrate that passage of St. Paul in which he says, “*God employs the weak to confound the strong*,

*and the foolish to confute the wise."* They succeeded, like Simon,—for I should not forget the allusion of my text—"*in taking so great a multitude of fishes, that their nets break.*"

Similar as is the above elucidation of the words of my text, to that which I employed in my last discourse, yet have I thought proper to renew it; both because it is a consoling evidence of the divinity of the christian religion, and because it relates immediately to the subject of my present discussion. It is the *call and mission* of the apostles, which are the sources of the *call and mission* of their successors; and it is the successes, that attended the preaching of the apostles, that are the proof, not only of the divinity of *their* mission, but of the mission of those who have replaced, and shall yet replace them, till the end of time. In religion as every thing was originally *apostolical*, so every thing, to merit veneration, must continue *apostolical*.

I have presented to you already, the claims which the protestant churches alledge to the title of apostolicity. Alas, how little calculated are those claims, you remarked, to convey conviction to the mind, or to give security to the heart! It remains for me now, only to lay before you the claims of the catholic church to the same sacred characteristic. In doing this, I must, of course, again observe the same natural order which I have hitherto pursued,—exhibiting to your contemplation, objects exactly correspondent to those which you viewed in my last discourse. I shall do



this: making only this distinction in doing it,--- a distinction which is not a departure from my preceeding order,---that, whereas I divided my last discourse into *three* separate considerations, I shall to-day compress the present into *two*; but into two, which are equivalent to the foregoing three. Thus, instead of proving separately, the perpetual duration of the catholic church, the perpetual mission of its pastors,---things which are, both of them, necessary to establish the claim to apostolicity,---I shall prove the perpetual duration of the church, from the evidence of the perpetual mission of its pastors. The evidence of the perpetual mission of its pastors is, in reality, the most positive proof of the perpetuity of the church itself: and being once established, renders, consequently, superfluous the production of any other testimonies, by which I might confirm this latter momentous truth. Having made this observation, I hasten to the immediate subjects of our discussion.

I. It would be useless, after the short interval that has occurred since my last discourse, to recal to your recollection, either the definition of apostolicity, or the import of what is included in the nature of apostolicity. You remember all this distinctly:---and it is essential that you remember it well. According to the definition and import of apostolicity, it is necessary, that the church which was founded by the apostles, and the mission also which was imparted to the apostles, should, without destruction or interruption, have

been perpetuated to the age we live in,—firm amid revolutions, unchanged amid changes.

I have said, that to ascertain in the catholic church, this stability of duration, a more positive proof cannot be adduced, than the spectacle of its pastors (who compass a large portion of its members, and whose functions are the most important duties of religion) regularly, in each age, succeeding to each other; and transmitting to each other, the mission which originally had been inherited from the hands of the apostles. The only difficulty here,—the protestant must conceive,—is by the light of evidences to establish these important facts. Well, my brethren, and this is what, without any difficulty, the catholic exults to do. To do it, we need only to consult the records of history; those records which the protestant himself considers as authentic. The light of history is a testimony, which, beyond the power of reasonable doubt, attests the regular and perennial succession of the catholic ministry.

I did, in my last discourse, remark, that the apostles whom Christ had sent, *as his Farther had sent Him*; and with whom likewise he had promised *to remain all days to the end of the world*,—I did remark, that in consequence of the above commission and assurance, these holy men chose for themselves co-operators and successors in their sacred ministry:—*co-operators*, in order to assist them in the government of the churches which their zeal had planted; *successors*, to

whom, on the occasion of their departure from this scene of labours, they might resign the burden of their functions, and the honour of their sees. Now, fortunately for the cause of religion, we have in the annals of history, and in the writings of the learned, the accounts very carefully preserved, of the resignations which the apostles made of their functions and sees to their successors; and of the resignations also which their successors' successors made, during a series of ages, to the pastors, who, in long order, have till the present age, continually replaced each other. Among these accounts, that which of all others is the most interesting, and which religion has preserved with the nicest care, is the history of the continuation until to-day, of the apostolic powers which Christ Jesus conferred upon the prince of the apostles, St. Peter. We have, thanks to that providence, which watches over the church, and which marks its paths with beams of light,—we have the proof of this continuation so luminously attested—so evident—that not hostility can contest, nor incredulity doubt, it. Important testimony! itself a bright feature in the divinity of the church: a testimony, which proving *immediately* the apostolicity of the mission of its supreme pastors, proves also *immediately*, yet directly, the apostolicity of the mission of all its other pastors. For, if you consult the rolls of history, you find that with our supreme pastors, the catholic pastors of every age, and of every nation, were always united in communion; acknowledging



of the apostles, and the first of these, Irenæus, who is known to have preserved the important catalogue in St. Irenæus—a name dear to religion and to learning; and a writer, who lived soon after the age of the apostles. The list of St. Irenæus comprises the names of all those successors of St. Peter, who, from the death of this apostle to the pontificate of Eleutherius, had governed the church of Rome. It includes the space of 177 years. I will not cite the words, in which Irenæus relates the order of their succession; I will cite the reflections only, which, after having related their succession, he sent, even at that time, after such comparatively trifling an interval, makes upon the reader's mind; and which, after having been fortified, after the lapse of spiritual power, as the centre of spiritual unity.

There have been several distinguished writers, remarkable of mere reputation, and possessing the means of knowing the history of the successors of St. Peter, and the order of their succession: have carefully handed down texts, even to his own time—the case of these illustrious men, and the list of names, 177

Tertullian, in his Book of Prescriptions, presents the same list of Roman pontiffs, precisely as does St. Irenæus, adding only to it, on account of the difference of the periods, a name or two more, than has done that holy pastor. And what again deserves our notice, is, that Tertullian, like Irenæus, from the evidence of this succession, deduces both the evidence of the divinity of the catholic church, and the evidence of the apostolicity of the mission of its pastors.

After Tertullian, the next who continues the catalogue of St. Peter's successors, is St. Optatus. He brings it down to the time of Siricius; that is, to the year three hundred and eighty-four. "*In this one chair,*" says the saint, speaking of the see of Rome, "*sat Peter first; to him succeeded Linus; to him Clement; to Clement, &c. . . . To Liberius succeeded Damasus; to Damasus, Siricius, the present pontiff, with whom we and all the world hold communion. And now,*" he adds, addressing himself exultingly to the Donatist—"and now, do you give an account of the origin of your sees,—you, that pretend to call yourselves the catholic church."—(Contra Parmen.)

Saint Austin is another writer, who had attended to the succession, and has preserved for us the list of St. Peter's successors; deriving from the long order of their continuance, the same conclusions as did Irenæus, Tertullian, and Optatus. The list which the saint has communicated, reaches down to his own time,—to the pontificate of Innocent the first, in the year four hun-



dred and two: and in its earlier eras, it exactly corresponds with the list, which I have alluded to already. "*Come,*" says he to the Donatists, "*come, brethren, if it be your wish to be ingrafted on the vine. I weep to see you as you are, lopped off from its sacred stock. Count up the pontiffs in the chair of Peter; and in that order, see which succeeded which. This is that rock, over which the proud gates of hell cannot prevail.*"

Hence, my brethren, without the necessity of producing any further testimonies, it follows,—if men will not contest the authority, or call in question the veracity of some of the fairest characters, that the christian world reveres,—it follows, that from the time of St. Peter to the time of innocent, in the fifth century, there existed in the see of Rome, an uninterrupted chain of pastors, and a continuation of an apostolic mission—the continuation of that same apostolic mission which Christ Jesus had imparted to St. Peter. Only he can doubt this, whose incredulity doubts of every thing.

And has the chain of Roman pastors,—for this is now the only point which we must investigate,—been continued and extended from the time of Innocent the first, to the present day—an interval, it is true, extremely long, and filled up with storms, and changes, and revolutions, and great events?—Yes, my brethren, the chain has been continued and extended all this whole length of period; from Innocent, who consoled the great Chrysostom, under the persecution of an ambitious princess, to Pius the Seventh, who himself



is the heroic victim of the persecution of a relentless victor. Indeed, the fact is so obvious, it is not even contested. It is conceded by the men, who are interested to deny it. To be assured of it, you need only to consult the political annals of any considerable state; or to appeal in our historians to the mere tablets of chronology. You will find, that all give to our Roman pontiffs the same line and length of succession, which I here assign them. The protestant in this agrees with the catholic; the historian with the divine. The reason is: from the pontificate of Innocent down to the present age, the line and series of these pastors are peculiarly manifest. Their conduct has been always prominent: their influence always conspicuous. Few were the great events and transactions, in which, either from a principle of piety, or some times of ambition, they did not bear a part.

Yes, my brethren, but if prompted by curiosity, you will give yourselves the trouble to consult the annals of the church, there you will trace, more distinctly still, the evidence of the truth which I am now establishing. There, attending to the occurrences of each epoch, you will observe, that the helm which had been confided to the trust of Peter, is with the greatest regularity transferred from hand to hand; and with pious care confided to the trust of each successor. You may mark the name, and read the character of each individual, who directed it: the date of the day, when it was committed to his guidance: and the hour

almost, when he resigned it. In short, admitting the accuracy of the lists which have been preserved by Irenæus, Tertullian, &c. you trace, in the annals of the church, a clear, plain, and incontestible evidence of a line of Roman pontiffs, the successors of St. Peter, during the long course of above eighteen hundred years.

My brethren, if the ancient fathers, in their times, and at the distance only of a few ages, so triumphantly produced the list of these holy men, evincing by it the divinity of the church, and the apostolicity of the mission of its pastors; and by it confuting the novelty and the claims of heresy:—if Tertullian impressed with the force of this argument, victoriously called out to the hosts of innovators, *“Shew us any thing like this:—unfold and shew us the origin of your churches:—shew us the lists of your bishops, in regular order from the days of the apostles, succeeding to each other;”*—if he could say to them, *“Who are you? Whence is your origin derived? What have you to do in my estate? I am the possessor. My possession is ancient. I am the heir of the apostles:”*—if he could say all this; and from this, after scarcely the lapse of two centuries, and the succession of hardly a dozen pontiffs, demonstrate the apostolicity of the church;—with how much more reason, and with how much more effect, might I, or any other catholic, demonstrate its apostolicity at present,—at present, when the continuance of Peter’s successors forms a chain of above eighteen hundred

years; and their number fills up a list of above a hundred and fifty pontiffs! Oh! were only a Tertullian now, or an Austin, standing in the same situation, in which I am placed before you,---addressing you, my brethren, from this seat of truth, and pressing the same argument, which I do to-day, upon your attention; and pressing it recommended by the circumstances which I have just referred to,---how the thoughts would glow, and the words burn, with which they would convey the exultation of their feelings to you! How the cause of truth would triumph in their eloquence! With what redoubled enthusiasm would they exclaim, ---“*let protestantism shew any thing like this?*” In reality, if the argument which these great men have employed to prove the apostolicity of the church, proved aught in their times, it certainly proves the same, and a great deal more, at present.

To the thoughtful and the philosophic mind, there is much, I have already observed, to admire in the stability of the church amid the fluctuations of human things. It is the same, in regard to the long continuance of the successors of St. Peter. Wisdom and reason, when they consider it, are struck with wonder; and piety discovers in it the visible effect of an almighty superintendence. The institutions of men soon perish. The modifications of human policy do not long retain their forms. Nothing human is permanent. To contemplate, therefore, an order of pontiffs reaching the whole length of eighteen centuries,—un-



changed, whilst every thing else was changing; uninterrupted, whilst all other institutions were perishing,—is a spectacle at once striking, awful, and impressive; calculated to inspire the protestant himself, if not with the conviction of its divinity, at least with a conviction of its wisdom; with a respect for its strength; with a veneration for its antiquity. Let only reason cast a look into the annals of time, or recal to its recollection the events and revolutions, which during the lapse of eighteen centuries, have taken place on the theatre of life. During that interval, in every kingdom of the civilized world, every government has changed its form; every dynasty resigned its power; every empire sunk to ruin. Rome itself, during it, has experienced in particular, all the vicissitudes of human instability: has been ruled alternately by consuls, emperors, kings, and exarchs: has been taken, plundered, sacked and reduced almost to a heap of ashes. In short, during it, every thing that is human and political,—the work of the power and ambition, of the wisdom and art of men, has either perished or undergone a variety of alterations—kingdoms, states, cities, monuments, laws, opinions, customs, heresies. Naught but the succession of our pontiffs, and the institutions of our holy religion, have remained unaltered. These alone, amid the general revolution; amid the storms of war; the ravages of passion; the conflicts of heresy, subsist undecayed and undecaying. They even subsist *in spite* of all these evils; though assailed by the

violence of persecution; though combated by the machinations of passion; though attacked by the artifices of error; though assaulted by the combined efforts of vice, Satan and the world. Surely,—prejudice itself will own it,—a succession of pastors thus perpetuated for eighteen centuries, and perpetuated amid such obstacles, is not the effect of chance, nor of earthly policy; not the creature of ambition, nor the offspring of worldly wisdom. The only method of accounting rationally for it, is to allow, that it is the result of a divine institution; and the consequence of that assurance given by our great Redeemer to his apostles, that *he would be with them all days, to the end of the world;*—or in other words, that it is the result and the proof of an *apostolic mission*.

I have said, that from the evidence of the apostolicity of the church of Rome, is inferred the evidence of the apostolicity of the various other catholic churches, which are dispersed throughout the universe. In reality, they are, all of them, the parts of one whole; the branches of one tree; the streams of one fountain; the rays of one sun. They all form only *one communion*, whose centre and head is the church of Rome. Of these churches, some were established by the apostles themselves, and their immediate successors:—some, and a very considerable part, by the successors of St. Peter, the Roman pontiffs, who in each age have, with pious zeal, deputed missionaries to preach the gospel in almost every region of the globe. But, in every age,

and in every region, the churches that were thus planted, were only considered as apostolical, or as portions of the true church, from the evidence of their union with the church of Rome. It is the remark of St. Jerom, that "*no bishop was ever acknowledged to be a lawful bishop, except inasmuch, as he was united in communion with the chair of St. Peter.*"

Will it not appear to you a singular kind of voucher, if still further to attest the apostolicity of the mission of our popes, I adduce even the sentiments and opinions of the professors of *paganism*? From men so prejudiced as were the pagans, and so hostile to every thing christian, perhaps may some of you imagine, no useful testimony can be borrowed in favour of our religion. My brethren, such idea, if you have such, is incorrect. It is from the prejudices often, and hostility of enemies, that very strong arguments are derived to confirm the cause they combat. Nothing is more honourable than the homage of enemies; being the unwilling concession of forced conviction. If, consequently, even in the sentiments of the pagans, we can trace the evidences of the mission of our pontiffs, such evidences should appear striking at least, and not unimportant. Well, it is a fact, that the pagans, during the course of several centuries, considered no one in the light of a true christian, unless he were joined in communion with the see of Rome. Schismatics, and the various heretics that were cut off from its society, they regarded as detached and uninteresting individ-



uals, branches lopped from the parent tree. Celsus, who often reproaches christianity with its divisions, excepts from this reproach, *the church of Rome*; which also he calls "*the Great Church.*" (Orig. L. v.) The Emperor Aurelian entertained the same notion as Celsus. When, on the occasion of the attempt of Paul of Samosata to seize upon the patriarchal see of Antioch, the cause was brought before the public tribunal, Aurelian decided, that "*the patriarchal see should belong to those, who were in communion with the see of Rome.*" (Euseb. L. vii.) Aminianus Marcellinus, speaking of the indignation which the Emperor Constantius conceived against St. Athanasius, says,—"*he ardently wished to procure his condemnation, BY THE AUTHORITY WHICH THE BISHOP OF ROME POSSESSES OVER ALL OTHER BISHOPS.*" (Am. Mar. L. xv.) Thus does paganism itself bear witness to the apostolicity of the mission of our popes, and to the apostolicity of the catholic church. It was hence also,—from the conviction of the superiority of the catholic church over every other religious establishment,—that on the occasions of persecution, the pagans always directed against *it alone* the exertions of their malice. Appealing to the history of the early ages, you find this uniformly the fact. You see the pagans hurling all the thunders of their indignation at the pastors only and members of that church, which was united with the chair of Peter: whilst as for error and heresy, you equally discover it, they either disregarded or favoured

them;---disregarded, on the principle, that error is seldom jealous of error; or favoured, on the maxim, that error is often kind to error.

The evidence of the apostolicity of the see of Rome, and the certainty that with it have been always united in communion all the catholic churches of the universe, owning its pre-eminence, and submitting to its control,---are proofs sufficient to convince reason, that in our great establishment there subsists, and for ever has subsisted, that divine mission which Christ Jesus conferred on his apostles. But, besides these proofs, how easy would it be for me to trace also in many other sees, as I have done in the see of the Roman pontiffs, a long and illustrious line of pastors, an order of succession, which, although not for ever uninterrupted, nor reaching precisely the same awful length with that which I have been describing, is yet sufficiently permanent and long, to render its claims to apostolicity incontestible. For example, we know that the sees of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, &c. were established in the time of the apostles, and by the apostles. We know the pastors who immediately succeeded the apostles; and during a long series of years, we know equally the successors of these successors. Not the lists of monarchs, who lived during the same interval of time, are better known than the chronology of these prelates. We know the time of their respective installations, and the eras of their deaths; and in regard of many of them, we know the history of their con-

duct. It is true, I have said, the chain of their succession has not been extended to the present day, without interruptions. It has been, sometimes interrupted. But, here again, we know the causes and effects of its interruptions: we know when its links were again united; and we know that previously to any interruption, it had reached the long length of several ages,—down to those ages when the empire of catholicity was general; and whence to trace its continuation is easy. These sees, consequently, are the vouchers of the permanency of the apostolic mission in our holy church. And, be it here again remarked, during the bright periods of their existence, they were all, and always, not only united, but subservient to the see of Rome.

And why may I not adduce, as another evidence of the apostolic mission of our pastors, the venerable subsistence of a multitude of other churches, which, without having lasted from the age which saw the apostles live, have still lasted from the ages that are not long subsequent to it? This is the case with several churches in Spain, Italy, France, &c. In Spain, the churches of Toledo, Cordova, &c. in Italy, those of Milan, Naples, &c.: in France, those of Lyons, Tours, &c. have subsisted from the early ages of christian fervor; from those ages which are often denominated apostolical, down to the present period of degeneracy. Their annals, more accurately preserved than the annals of civil governments, exhibit to our astonished,



but gratified reason, a line of pastors during this whole length of ages,—unbroken and uninterrupted,—uninjured by the violence of persecutions, as well as unimpaired by the sunshine of prosperity; a line of pastors that in canonical succession, have, till the present day, replaced each other. These are monuments of stability, compared with which, profane history has nothing similar; protestantism nothing analogous. These too attest the apostolicity of the mission of our pastors; and the apostolicity consequently of our church. And here, once more, let it be recollected; in relation to all these churches, that their founders, and the successors of their founders, were subjects of the see of Rome:—the former deputed perhaps immediately by it; the latter exulting always in their union with it, as the best proof of the apostolicity of their own delegation.

I do not know whether our protestant brethren would allow me to appeal to this nation, likewise, for another testimony of the apostolicity of the mission of the catholic clergy. In this nation, catholicity, and the succession of its catholic pastors, with an interruption that does not merit notice, have continued,—counting from the time of St. Augustine,—during the course of above twelve hundred years. Perhaps, to prejudice, this space may appear too short to give a title to apostolicity. I will not contest the question: although a church and succession of pastors, which have subsisted twelve hundred years, linked to a church and mission, which have subsisted from the

time of the apostles, may, I think, with propriety, be deemed apostolical. However, I will not contest this:—I will merely say, that at all events, even in the eye of prejudice, twelve hundred years are an awful space of time: and the uninterrupted chain of catholic pastors during all that space, is a very awful object. Are they not, at least, strong presumptions of apostolicity? Do they not speak a language to reason, that has a claim to very serious consideration? Think you, that if protestantism possessed aught which resembled them, its ministers would not, with much more eloquence than I do, press the pleasing circumstances upon the attention of the public? Yes, certainly they would do it. Their zeal would do it, fervently; their sagacity would do it well.

I have then, by arguments as simple as they are convincing, established the apostolicity of the mission of our clergy. From the certainty too of this apostolicity, and the evidence that our pastors have subsisted through every age, preaching, teaching, and performing the sacred rites,—from this certainty and this evidence, I have inferred likewise, the certainty and the evidence of our church's *perennial duration*,—that other appendage of genuine apostolicity. In reality, my brethren, I could not possibly adduce, good sense cannot possibly imagine, a more palpable proof of the perennial subsistence of a church, than the evidence of the perennial subsistence of its pastors. The evidence of a body of pastors subsisting always, and al-

ways preaching, teaching, and performing the sacred rites, is the evidence, manifestly, of a body of faithful subsisting equally; attending always to the instructions, and participating always in the mysteries.

However, plain as is the above inference; or evident as is the duration of the catholic church, from the evidence of the duration of the mission of its pastors,—yet, let it not be concluded, that besides this argument, there are not many others also, which attest, equally, this important truth. There are many such arguments, my brethren, which not only attest it, but attest it to a measure of demonstration, which the blindness alone of error will not see. I have noticed superficially a few of these arguments, in my sermon *on catholicity*. In that sermon, you may remember, I remarked to you, that there are, even along the public walks, and in all the avenues of life, *monuments*, that declare the venerable antiquity of our great establishment. Such, I said, are the, still, awful piles and majestic domes, that adorn our cities: such, the ivy-mantled arches, and the weather-beaten columns, that ornament our landscapes. These, many of them, have beheld above a thousand years roll by them; and above a thousand years our religion called them *her's*. Now, let me merely ask any reasonable mind, and above all, any reasonable mind that is possessed of fine sensibility (for, these things speak both to the understanding and to the *heart*) let me ask it, if it can contemplate these monuments, and not feel, I do not say, a mere venera-



tion for the religion to which they appertain, but an irresistible impulse to conceive, that the religion to which they appertain is apostolical? Does not the heart itself whisper to the understanding, that they are *too old* to deceive; and that they have stood too long the tests of the public faith, and the proofs of the public sentiment, to be the effects of error, or the results of superstition? This is the reflection precisely, that was made some years ago, by a shrewd, though not perhaps a very polished protestant: as indeed it is a reflection, that is still often made by many of our lovers of antiquities. Absorpt, one day, in the contemplation of the venerable vestiges of our religion, after having calculated their age, and by the magic power of fancy, lived through the series of generations which he had witnessed,—he exclaimed, “*surely these stones are too old to tell me lies.*” The observation was but the dictate of common sense. The stones of our monuments are “*too old to tell lies.*” If men had the prudence to interrogate them, and the wisdom to listen to their voice,—commanding at the same time their prejudices and passions to be silent, they would hear the very stones of our walls, and the dust which they tread on, proclaim the apostolicity of our religion: they would hear them speak truths sufficiently forcible to convince their reason;—as they convinced the reason of the protestant to whom I have been alluding,—that catholicity is indeed divine. The proofs of the divini-

ty of our church—would men only study them! *gaze them in the face*, each hour.

II. I have but one other argument to discuss, in order to finish this discourse, and to establish the claims of catholicity to the title of *apostolical*. I have but to prove, that the *doctrines* of our church, like the mission of its pastors, have descended *from the apostles*; and come down to us along the stream of time, pure and uncontaminated. You feel, when I announce the object of this discussion, the greatness of its importance. It must appear peculiarly important to the protestant, to whom, in general, doctrines are *every thing*; and to whom, it is true, judging from the principles of protestantism, doctrines should appear *every thing*,—the sole objects nearly of his veneration, (for *faith alone*, it is the general protestant maxim, *gives justice and salvation*.) However, my brethren, it is on the subject of doctrines, you must also feel, that the disagreement between the protestant and the catholic is considerable. It is even considerable between the protestant and the protestant. Aware of the consequences of conceding aught to us on this momentous question, it is, on the contrary, on this question in particular, that our protestant brethren are severe, and combat us with the fiercest animosity. They are here violent and malevolent:—and because the nature of the subject presents shelter to artifices, and subterfuges to cunning, they are also, here, subtle and deceitful. It is consequently here, more than any where, that pro-

testant hostility is formidable to us: as it is here, more than any where, that it is mischievous. It is here, that the enemies of catholicity, the defenders of protestantism, themselves the dupes of prejudice, create prejudice in the minds of others:---themselves cheated by ignorance and misconception, cheat also the credulity of the public, inducing them by insults, invective, and ridicule; by falsehoods, fictions, and misrepresentations, to disbelieve, what without such injustice, they would respect; and to believe, what without such dissingenuity, they would abhor.

If, consulting the writings of our protestant brethren, you examine their representations of our tenets, you find them there depicted in every frightful colour, and placed in every odious attitude, that the malevolent insingenuity of the fancy can suggest. You find them there described, not merely as untrue, unholy, unapostolical;---you find them described as profane, idolatrous, impious, sacriligious, antichristian, absurd.---There is scarce a protestant publication, which the press teems out on the subject of religion,---or hardly upon any subject,---in which these horrible assertions are not repeated. In particular they are repeated, and each Sunday, with indecent energy, re-echoed from the pulpit, where embodying every thing that ill will can suggest,---every image that is disgusting; every imputation that is odious; every expression that is cruel,---the zealous, *not charitable*, preacher excites his hearers to detest what he nicknames *popery*. It is



not, I have said so often, that I wonder at this illiberality. If men will support the empire of error, it is by these methods, that they must do it. Neither do I wonder at this illiberality, even in this liberal nation. It is but an act of consistency in this nation, consonant quite to the language of its creed, and to the testimony of its Book of Homilies,---instruments these, which are sacred to the English clergy, the rules of their faith and the guides of their piety. In these instruments, you remember it well, our doctrines are reprobated as "*abominable idolatry*;"---and what is more frightful still, in these instruments it is said, that "*in this abominable idolatry the whole world was buried for eight hundred years and more.*" Dreadful sentences! My brethren, sentences, surely, with which charity had naught to do; sentences, which at once consign to damnation (for idolatry always damns) the whole mass of human beings, during the long space of eight hundred years! With how bad a grace does the protestant, after passing this sweeping act of universal reprobation, affect to censure the want of charity in the catholic, who condemns, not the whole host of heretics in a body, but the individual heretic only, who knowingly and obstinately persists in the profession of erroneous tenets! But in short, be this as it may, it is easy from the maxims of protestantism, to account for the illiberality of its members to us, on the subject of our doctrines.

To ascertain, however, whether our doctrines be such as the protestant represents them,---false and idolatrous; or such as we assert they are,---true and apostolical, is not, my brethren, a matter of great difficulty; although you are sensible it is a matter of the most vital importance. To ascertain whether our doctrines be *apostolical*, the obvious method is, to consult the writings of those pastors of the church, who flourished during the acknowledged period of its purity; to verify what were the doctrines of these holy men; to place them by the side of the doctrines, which we profess at present; and to compare them. Such process must at once present the resemblance, if they do resemble; or the difference, if they differ. The method is to consult the liturgies and rites of the early ages; the monuments and histories of nations; and even the opinions and practices of the ancient heresies.---These, all of them, furnish, on this interesting subject, the medium of wise conjecture, and of accurate information: and from their serious discussion, reason may trace with unerring correctness, the identity, or the dissimilitude, of the ancient with our present catholic doctrines.

I have indeed already, and on more than one occasion, shewn you, that according to the principles which in every age the catholic church has publicly professed, it is impossible that any corruption or alteration could have taken place in her doctrines. The principles of the catholic church, in every age, have been

always these:—to consider the doctrines of revelation as divine; and consequently unchangeable;—to consider them unchangeable; and consequently, in each age, to believe what the preceding age, and every age before the preceding, had believed; or in other words, according to the rule of the fathers, “*to believe nothing at any period, but what ALWAYS, and BY ALL, and EVERY WHERE, has been believed before.*” Our church, every catholic knows it, and herself admits it, possesses no power to altar the depositum of faith, or to make any new article of belief. On the contrary, her whole power reaches only to the preservation of that sacred depositum; and to the holy care of seeing that it be transmitted entire to the end of time. These principles render any alteration in our doctrines impossible. They preserve their apostolicity inviolate; and they prove, that as no innovation *could* corrupt, so no innovation *has* corrupted them.

Another argument, by which likewise I have endeavoured to convince you,—and which was sufficient to convince you,—that our doctrines are apostolical, was this:—that if indeed at any period, any error had changed them; or as the protestant intrepidly asserts, “idolatry had ingrafted itself upon them,”—the time, the cause, the occasion of such revolution would be known. For, if we know, I have remarked, the time, the cause, the occasion, even of trifling heresies; if the annals of history inform us of all the important, and sometimes unimportant events, which have occurred



in different nations,—how much more certain it is, that had the dreadful revolution taken place in the church, which the protestant avers,—a revolution corrupting the faith of the universe, and transforming the whole body of the faithful into a body of idolaters,—how much more certain it is, that such revolution, its time, its cause, and its occasion, would be known? A revolution such as this, would be, evidently, from its extent, the most diffusive; from its obstacles, the most difficult; from its mischiefs, the most pernicious, that the world had ever witnessed, or the annals of time related. Therefore, at all events, some vestige would subsist, to tell us that it had happened. And, what is the fact? Why, neither the annals of time relate it; nor does there subsist one vestige to insinuate even its probability. The very arguments themselves of the protestants, by which they have endeavoured to prove such fable, from their contradictions, perplexities, absurdities and fictions, are demonstrations that no such revolution has taken place; and that no innovations have impaired the apostolicity of our religion.

But, I have said, that to ascertain whether or not, our doctrines be apostolical, one method, and an obvious one, is to consult the writings of the fathers, who flourished during the pure ages of the church; and to compare their doctrines with those, which the catholic believes at present. For example, we know, and the protestant allows it, that the doctrines of the church in the second century, were similar to those of the first

century:—that those of the third,—this also the protestant admits,—were similar to those of the second:—and those of the fourth,—the Socinian alone denies it,—were the same with those of the third. Here consequently, since the writers of the fourth century were numerous, and their writings express correctly, what was then the faith of the true believer,—here we have a criterion and a rule to guide us; a term of comparison; a line by the side of which it is easy to draw a parallel. The fourth century, which I shall select on account of its greater number of writers, was in every point of view, one of the brightest eras of the church; bright in the wisdom, and brighter still, in the sanctity of its pastors. It was the age of the Austins, the Jeroms, the Chrysostoms, the Basils, the Cyrils, the Ambroses, &c. names, which virtue and learning will revere, long as virtue and learning have admirers.

You will not expect, however, that within the limits of a discourse, I should draw a parallel between each specific doctrine, which the faithful of the fourth century believed, and which those of the nineteenth profess at present. Such parallel far exceeds the measure of a discourse. It will suffice for all the purposes which I have proposed,—both to convince the protestant, and to gratify you,—if I present the parallel between the leading doctrines of the two eras; or rather, between those doctrines which the adversaries of our religion are pleased chiefly to contest. The evidences that these accord, will be evidence sufficient to con-

vince wisdom, that, if the religion of the fourth age were apostolical, such also must be that of the nineteenth.

One of the leading articles of our religion, and that which, above all others, the protestant contests, is our belief respecting *transubstantiation*;—a mystery which he not only contends is not apostolical, but idolatrous. You know what precisely is our belief, on this article. Behold then the belief of the fourth century. Saint Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in his instructions to the catachumens,—an occasion, of course, in which, if ever, he would deliver himself with precision, and say nothing but what was consonant to the general belief of the faithful,—in this instrument, he thus expresses himself. “*Since, therefore, Christ asserts, when speaking of the bread,—THIS IS MY BODY,—who shall presume to doubt that it is such? And, when he says, THIS IS MY BLOOD,—who can doubt, and say, that it is not his blood? He once changed water into wine, by an act of his will. And is he undeserving of belief, when he changes wine into blood? If he performed a stupendous miracle, when he was invited to worldly nuptials; with how much greater reason should we confess, that in the banquet which himself gives to the children of the spouse, he gives his body and his blood? Therefore, let us receive his body and his blood, with full certitude, that it is such; for, under the species of bread, is given to you the body; and under the species of wine, the blood; in order that, receiving the body and blood of*



*Christ, you may become one body and blood with him. . . . . Know, then, and be assured, that what appears to us bread, is not bread; although it tastes like bread,—BUT THE BODY OF CHRIST: and what seems wine, is not wine; although it taste like wine,—but THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.”* How clearly is here expressed the mystery of transubstantiation! Sure I am, that neither I, nor any catholic pastor, nor any catholic catechism, could express it more correctly. And, my brethren, were I delivering a discourse upon this article, I could shew you, that just in as plain a manner as does Cyril, a multitude of the other fathers of this century have delivered their opinions, and the public belief, respecting it,—Chrysostom, Ambrose, Jerom, Austin, &c. Let me only cite to you a few words from Ambrose. *In his instructions to the initiated*, the saint, after having first shewn them, that God had often, by the agency of men, changed one substance into another, addresses them in this manner:—*“Now, if a human blessing could change nature, what shall I say of the divine consecration, in which the words of our Lord and Saviour operate? For, that sacrament which you receive, is performed by the word of Christ. And, if the word of Elias could call down fire from heaven, why should not the word of Christ be able to change the nature of the elements? You have read of the work of the creation. God spake, and all was made; he commanded, and all was created. If then, the word of Christ could out of nothing, make what*

*was not; why should it not be able to change things which are, into what they were not? For, it is not a less thing to give new natures to objects, than to change their natures."* I could even produce many attestations from protestant writers, who allow that the fathers of the church, when they speak of the eucharist, employ often the words *change, transmutation, conversion, transelementation, &c.* And what is the meaning of such terms, or what their difference from the term, which we now employ,—*transubstantiation?* My brethren, none.

Another article of our religion, in which the protestants dissent from us,—at least the protestants in this country,—is *confession*. The institution and practice of confession, we contend, are divine and apostolical: being the natural and the necessary result of that commission which Christ imparted to his apostles, *to forgive sins*. And hear what Saint Basil says, respecting confession, in the fourth century. "*The confession of sins is necessary, for a reason similar to that which obliges men to discover the maladies of the body. As then, men discover the maladies of their bodies, not indiscriminately to all, but to those only who possess the art of curing them, so the confession of sins should be made to those alone, who knew the remedies for sin. . . It is necessary, that the confession of sins should be made to those, to whom is confided the dispensation of the sacred mysteries. Thus, we find, acted the saints who have done penance.*" It

is so evident, that confession was practised in the apostolic ages, that the Centuriators, and a multitude of other learned protestants admit it. "*We do not deny*," says Daille (De Conf.) "*that the ancient fathers knew, and praised the communication of the faithful with their pastors, in which, as to their physicians, they laid open their sins and the wounds of their conscience; solicited advice, and sought consolation and absolution.*" It is owing to the evidence of the apostolicity of this institution, that the chief sect of the reformation, and perhaps the most learned,---the Lutherans, ---retain it as a sacrament; and practise it as we do. "*Secret confession*," says Luther, "*as it is cultivated now, pleases me wonderfully; it is not only useful, but necessary.*" (De Capt. Bab.) And, my brethren, looking at the Common Prayer Book of this country, and remarking its rubric for the visitation of the sick, I do not understand, how, with any thing like consistency, the apostolicity of confession can be called in question, by our protestant countrymen. In that rubric, you all know, it is recommended, "*that if the sick person feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter, he shall be moved to make a SPECIAL CONFESSION of his sins; and SHALL BE ABSOLVED by the minister*,"---in the very same form of words, which we employ in the administration of the sacrament of penance. Now, I ask, by virtue of *what power*, does the protestant minister pretend to receive the confession of the sick man, and to grant him absolution? Is it divine; is it human? To



pretend to forgive sins, by virtue of any human power, is manifestly not only extravagant, but profane. Therefore, it must be done,—if done at all,—in virtue of a divine power. And if done by a divine power, therefore again, by an apostolical power. For my own part, I wonder how any individual, who respects the Book of Common Prayer, can contest the apostolicity of confession.

The next doctrine of our religion, which I shall notice, as contested by the generality of protestants, and by catholics considered as apostolical, is that of *purgatory*. On this occasion, however, instead of citing to you any extracts from the writings of the fathers, who express their belief of this mystery, in as clear a stile as I should, I will give you the honest acknowledgment of a learned protestant prelate, respecting the opinion of the fathers; and indeed, respecting that of the universal church. “*Let not,*” says Bishop Forbes, in his discourse, *Of Purgatory*,---*let not the ancient practice of praying and making oblations for the dead, received throughout the universal church of Christ, almost from the very time of the apostles, be any more rejected by protestants, as unlawful or vain. Let them reverence the judgment of the primitive church; and admit a practice strengthened by the uninterrupted profession of so many ages. . . . The universal church has believed this practice, not only to be lawful, but likewise beneficial to the souls departed. Let it be granted, that this custom was always judged lawful, and also*

*profitable, by pious antiquity; and most universally received, at all times, in the church."* And then the learned prelate asserts, that "*it is evident in Epiphanius and St. Augustin, that the contrary opinion of Alerius, who opposed prayers and oblations for the dead, was condemned.*" There have been several other English prelates and divines, who, with the same candor as Dr. Forbes, have allowed the antiquity of the doctrine of purgatory,—Barrow, Sheldon, Blandford, Thorndyke, &c. But, let the testimony of Forbes suffice for my present purpose.

¶ *The invocation of the saints* is the fourth point of our belief, which, violently insulted by our dissenting brethern, is by us revered as apostolical. To shew its apostolicity, I have again recourse to the criterion which have suggested, the sentiments of the early ages. Behold what St. Ambrose says, concerning this doctrine. "*It is our duty to pray to the angels, who have been given to us to be our guardians. We should address our prayers to the martyrs, whose bodies still remaining among us, are pledges of their protection. . . . Neither let us blush to ask their intercession under our infirmities, since they, even when they conquered knew what infirmities are.*" Saint Cyril in his Catechesis, expresses himself thus. "*When we offer up the body sacrifice, we make a commemoration of those who have died before us: first of the patriarchs; then of the prophets; next of the apostles and martyrs, in order that God, moved by their prayers, may listen*

*more favourably to ours."* But, satisfactory as are these testimonies of Ambrose and Cyril, perhaps is the following from St. Basil more striking yet. It is a kind of profession of faith, addressed to Julian the apostate. *"According to the faith of christians, which is without spot, and which we have received from God;---I confess one God, omnipotent. . . . I receive the holy apostles, the prophets and the martyrs; and I invoke them, that they may pray for me; and that through their prayers, God may be merciful to me, and forgive me my faults. It is for this reason also, that I honour and revere their images: particularly, seeing that these things have been ordained by the tradition of the holy apostles; and that far from being prohibited, they appear in our churches."*

Thus does the saint attest, not only the belief of his own age, but of the preceding ages;—thus attest, not only the practice of invoking the intercession of the saints, but the custom also of keeping and respecting their images. But here too, as in the disputed tenets which I have been citing, we have again,---such is the evidence on the subject,---the acknowledgment of our adversaries to confirm it. The Centuriators, and with the Centuriators, a host of other protestants allow it. The Centuriators own, that Vigilantius was condemned as a heretic, for having denied the lawfulness of invoking the saints. (Cent 4.)

From these few instances of the identity of our doctrines with those of the fathers, (for I have selected the points which the protestant principally disputes) you



may judge of the apostolicity of our religion: and from them, very logically conclude, that, if that be apostolic which the fathers taught,—then, since our doctrines resemble theirs, our faith like theirs, must be apostolic too. In the examples which I have produced, this truth is palpable. And if palpable in them, why not in any other disputed doctrines; since other disputed doctrines are, in fact, disputed less, than they are? “*Indeed,*” says very candidly, the learned protestant bishop, Dudith, in his epistle to Beza, “*if that be the truth, which the ancient fathers have professed, it must be owned, that then the truth is WHOLLY (tota) on the side of the Papists.*” It was hence, I have observed before,—it was because the sentiments of the ancient fathers accorded so exactly with the opinions of the modern catholic, that many of the first defenders of protestantism have treated those venerable men with so much insolence,—vilifying them (we hail the insult, as a compliment to us) with the intentionally opprobrious appellation of *papist*. Certainly, it was for this reason. Again, therefore, the consequence is, that if what the fathers of the first ages believed, were *apostolical*,—what we believe, who believe the same, cannot be *unapostolical*.

There are several other arguments besides that which I have just concluded, that, either with it clearly prove, or forcibly confirm, the identity of the ancient with our modern doctrines. Such, I have said, are the early liturgies and rites; the monuments and

ruins, in various nations; and even the tenets and practices of the ancient heresies themselves. These, it is certain, are either plain vouchers, or strong confirmations of the apostolicity of our doctrines. I will not, however; detain you with the discussion of these objects; conceiving, that in relation to the early liturgies and rites, you will easily believe, that these must have corresponded to the nature of the doctrines, which I have already noticed; and as for monuments and ruins, they, I have shewn you sufficiently in my preceding sermons, bear a silent, but eloquent testimony, in favour of our religion. I will only lay before you, as a further evidence in its favour, a few brief considerations borrowed from the tenets and practices of the ancient heresies. Even these furnish a *demonstration* of the antiquity of our creed, that suffices, I do not say, merely to refute the bold and absurd charges of innovation which protestantism so often urges against it, (they do manifestly refute those charges) but to convince prejudice itself, if prejudice would reason, that our belief is apostolical and divine. Behold, what at least is a demonstration of the falsehood of the charges, which are brought by protestantism against it.

It is a curious and interesting accident, my brethren, both in the annals of the church, and in the history of the human mind, that from among the multitude of heresies, which at an early period of the christian institute, passion, or the love of novelty had created, there

are some, that in spite of the storms and revolutions of time, have subsisted through the lapse of ages; and that subsist even at the present day, considerable in the number, if not respectable in the character, of their professors. From various attestations of the members of these facts, we know precisely what are the doctrines which they believe, and the practices which they observe. We know this from the voice of history; from the acknowledgments of many protestant writers; and above all, from a body of evidence compiled by the immortal authors of that immortal work; *La Perpetuite de la Foi*. The heresies to which I am alluding, are those of the Nestorians, Eutychians, Armenians, Jacobites, &c. seduced, during the bright ages of piety, from the fold of the church; and dispersed now over different parts of Asia; over certain districts of Africa; and a few portions of Europe. But, this is the striking circumstance:—it is an incontrovertible fact, that, with very few exceptions, —and exceptions which are almost wholly of a speculative kind, relating chiefly to the nature and personality of Christ,—but, with very few exceptions, it is an incontrovertible fact, that the doctrines of all these heresies are *the same*; and their practices, with mere shades of difference, similar with those which the catholic church reveres and cultivates. Like the catholic church, they believe in the sacrifice of the mass, and in transubstantiation; like it, they respect the memories of the saints; and invoke their intercession; like it, ad-



mit a purgatory, and offer up supplications for the dead; like it, receive the sacrament of penance, and retain confession. With similar exceptions also of a few tenets,—and those too speculative,—I might say of the Greek church, what I have said of these heresies. The Greek church, upon every article of our religion, that the protestant contests, believes exactly as believes the church of Rome.

Having stated these facts, I come now to the reflections and conclusions, which they spontaneously present. Whence, I ask my reason; or rather, my brethren, let me ask yours,—whence this nice coincidence of belief, between all these various churches among themselves; and still more, between all these various churches and the church of Rome? These churches separated, some of them, from each other, by seas and continents, have neither with each other connection nor correspondence; whilst in regard of their respective members, they vary as much in character, as vary in temperature the different climates, which they inhabit. Whence, therefore, the resemblance of their doctrines? But whence, for this is the question here, whence proceeds the resemblance of the doctrines of all these churches, to the doctrines of the catholic church? Did then these churches, at some period since their separation from the catholic church borrow their doctrines from it? Or did the catholic church, within the same interval, borrow its doctrines from them? If the doctrines, either of these heretical churches

ches, or of the catholic church, be new, as the protestant asserts they are, they must, it is evident, on one side or the other, have been borrowed. This is the sole supposition by which their novelty, if they be new, can possibly be reconciled with their argument. For surely not sophistry itself will contend, that reason or reflection; that chance or accident; that any cause, save imitation, could ever have induced men of nations so remote and different, and of characters so opposed and various, to accord exactly in the same religious principles.

Here then I ask,—did these multifarious churches borrow their doctrines from the catholic church, since the era of their separation from its communion? My brethren, the man who can seriously assert, or really believe this supposition, is very little indeed acquainted, either with the temper and history of heresy, or with the temper and history of the human mind. Heresies have been in every age alike: in every age, as animated and rancorous against the church which cut them off from its society, as protestantism is at present. Therefore, it is manifest, that they would not borrow from it, what they could easily have ascertained was, *if new*,—an innovation. They would not upon its recommendation, have adopted a recent falsehood. On the contrary, had any doctrine of the catholic church been recent, so far from adopting it themselves, they would have reproached that church with the adoption; and gratified at the just occasion of wise re-

venge, have retorted back upon it the charge of innovation, which it,---they maintained,---had improperly cast upon them. Certain it is,---neither will good sense dispute it,---that at no time since their excommunication, have these churches incorporated into their religion any new and erroneous doctrines, upon the authority, or recommendation of the catholic church.

But, might not the catholic church derive its doctrines from these churches? Preposterous question! It would be an useless employment both of your time and my own, to shew that it did not. As heresy, after its separation from the church, takes nothing new from it; so much less, is the church disposed to take up novelties from heresy. Even the protestant has not presumed to impute this weakness to it. And what, therefore, now is the consequence which I deduce from this discussion? My brethren, this:---that since, with few exceptions, the doctrines of the catholic church and of the ancient sectarists are alike;---since the catholic church has not borrowed its doctrines from these sectarists; nor these sectarists derived their doctrines from the catholic church, at any period posterior to their separation from it,---*therefore must the doctrines of both* (both of the catholic church and of these sectarists) *have been at the periods of the separation, the SAME that they are at present; the established doctrines then, of the universal church, as they are now,---and have been always,---the established doc-*



*trines of the catholic church.* If any deduction be plain, it is the above. Thus, even from the testimony of heresy itself, do we prove, that the tenets of our religion,—all those tenets nearly which the protestant denies,—were believed and venerated by the church, *in the fifth century*;—for, this is the century, in which the heresies, which I have mentioned, arose. Is not this alone, I do not say, a presumption, but a proof, of their apostolicity? It is so to piety and wisdom. But, at all events, it proves this:—it proves most lucidly, the falsehood of all those assertions which impute to our doctrines novelty; and victoriously refutes the bold absurdities of such men as a Porteus, a Barrington, a Le Mesurier, &c. who in the very teeth of evidence, which contradicts them, intrepidly attribute our tenets to the artifices of modern popes, or to the superstition of modern prelates. Our tenets—*the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, purgatory, the invocation of saints, &c.* were manifestly, upon the testimony of heresy itself, believed by the church, *IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.* With argument alone, I can refute nearly every error of protestantism; and prove almost every truth of catholicity.

Here then, my brethren, I close the discussion of the church's apostolicity; and with it the discussion of all controverted subjects. In the series of the eight discourses, which I have addressed to you, my discussions, I flatter myself, to have been always conducted *with charity.* Charity was the sole motive, that urged

me to undertake them. Sure I am, that they have been always conducted *with candor*. I could not possibly have had any motive to be uncandid. As for the arguments, which I have on every occasion employed, they have been, you must have remarked it, the most easy, the most common and perspicuous, that I could select; which I have neither set off by the arts of oratory, nor enforced by the noise of declamation,—the mere dictates of reason, in the plain language of common sense. It was thus, at least, that I wished to address you: and it is thus, that religion wishes to be recommended.

The plan of my discourses, too, you have been equally aware, is natural, as the method in which I have conducted them is easy. It is the most natural that reason could adopt; consisting merely in laying down obvious principles, and clear definitions,—definitions and principles, which the protestants themselves admit:—in applying alternately these definitions and principles to the respective situations of the catholic and protestant churches:—in forming comparisons from the applications; and from the comparisons deducing conclusions. Such process is the process that wisdom suggests to the lover of security.

And, my brethren, when, after having impressed your minds with the accuracy and wisdom of the maxims which I have laid down, when you came to behold their application,—came to contemplate the scenes which the catholic and protestant churches

alternately exhibit,—how forcibly must you have been struck; if hitherto you had been unacquainted with such spectacles! How gratified the catholic! How confounded the protestant! In the present discourse, for example, and in my preceding one, you beheld the respective situations of the catholic and protestant establishments, in relation to the claims of *apostolicity*. And how greatly contrasted did you find them! How very different the two portraits! In the catholic church, considering the *mission of its clergy*, you saw a long line of pastors reaching without interruption, from the time of the apostles to the present day; and consisting,—multitudes of them,—of the fairest characters that have adorned the theatre of society.—In the protestant church, consulting the same characteristic, you witnessed a short chain,—a few links,—of teachers, reaching only from yesterday;—or reaching at most,—to give it its greatest length,—to give it all the scattered apostles of obsolete heresies, whom protestantism reveres,—reaching only from the thirteenth century. In the catholic church, considering *its doctrines*, you observed, that the same sun of truth which had been once kindled at the throne of the divinity, has, for eighteen hundred years, continued always to shed its benign and sacred light; neither extinguished, a day, by the storms of passion; nor put out by error. In the protestant church, remarking the same feature you took notice, that a great variety of its tenets are entirely new; and that, where they



have any claim to antiquity, (save in the articles, where they agree with us) they are the maxims of ancient heresies renewed. And, my beloved friends, the scenes were similar, when explaining to you the other characteristic, I placed before you the relative states of the catholic and protestant communities.--- Explaining to you the characteristic of the church's *unity*, you saw in the catholic community one society without division: in the protestant, an immense multitude of societies, all at variance with each other. Explaining its *sanctity*, you contemplated in the catholic community, the cultivation of all those practices and maxims, which have elevated the saints to sanctity: in the protestant, you sighed to reflect, that those practices and maxims are done away. Explaining its *catholicity*, you traced in the catholic community, a wide empire without a boundary: in that of protestantism, a countless number of trifling sects and institutions, confined, each of them, nearly, to the narrow limits of a single state.

And what, therefore, is the general consequence which I now deduce from the series of my discourses? My brethren, this:--that, if that be the true church, which possesses the marks of the true church,---which is *one, holy, catholic and apostolical*,---and this is what the protestant admits,---then, *is that church the catholic church*. The catholic church possesses all these marks. She possesses them so manifestly, that not even the eye that is clouded by prejudice, would it

only view them attentively, could fail to discover them. At least, this I am completely sure of, that not even the eye which is clouded by prejudice; nor the mind which is offuscated by passion, or warped by partiality, if it could be induced to compare together the features of the catholic and protestant communities, could fail to remark the striking differences which distinguish them,---the beauty and splendor of the former, contrasted with the deformity and darkness of the latter. Here, then, let me just put these few questions to our dissenting brethren. Let them tell me, why, if the catholic church be a false church, as they assert, it alone possesses the marks of the true church,---at least, possesses these marks more distinctly, than any other christian institute? Let them tell me, why, if it be a false church, the God of truth, of justice, and of wisdom, has appended to it so many attestations to recommend it,---so many rays of light to point it out? Let them tell me why, if it be a false church, it alone is *one*---united, throughout the universe, in the closest bands of faith:---why, if false, it alone has subsisted so many ages:---why, if false, it alone inherits so vast an empire:---why if false, it alone is the heir of the true name of the true church:---why if false, it alone, for so many generations, has nourished in its bosom, the good, the great, the wise of every nation? If a church like this, so united, so extensive, so ancient, and so holy; so visibly protected by the arm of the Almighty,---if it be a false church, then, my breth-

ren, I have no hesitation in saying, that the God of wisdom has deceived us; that he has scattered snares beneath our feet to entrap us,—to entrap, not only the unwary, but the wise,—snares, into which it is an act of prudence for men to enter. However, thank heaven! it is not thus. The marks that distinguish our church are not illusive. They are the pure ray of truth: they are the pillar of light, placed by the hand of God before the sanctuary of his mercies. Comparing, therefore, my situation with that of the protestant, I can boldly say, *Confidence for confidence*; and I have infinitely greater reasons to be confident, than he has. *Conscience for conscience*; and the dictate of my conscience is wiser far, than his is. *Security for security*; and much do I prefer my security to his.—My security reposes upon the same foundation, with that of all the saints. In reality, the confidence of the catholic, in his belief of the catholic church, is firm; his conscience upright; his security safe.

And let not,—as I feel he may do,—let not here any protestant object, that, “if indeed the evidences of our religion were so plain, men could not mistake them.” Alas! my brethren, feeble objection! what is there, that men will not,—do not,—incessantly mistake? You see around you, in the walks of life, men that shut their eyes to the brightest rays of light; that reject the whole christian revelation; and see not the blaze that points it out;—men that reject even the existence of the Divinity, and deny the undeniable



proofs, that make it manifest. What wonder, consequently, that there should be men, that either do not admit, or do not see the proofs, which mark the divinity of catholicity?

But let me, very briefly, recapitulate a few of the unhappy causes why the enemies of our religion reject it; and not only reject, but frequently condemn it. One general cause,—a cause which extends to an infinity of important objects,—is the general indolence of mankind for the great interests of salvation. Lulled by indolence to false security, the protestant seldom interrogates the evidences of our religion; nor suspects the want of evidence in his own. He does not study our religion; and of course does not know it: he does not know it; and of course rejects it. Of the great herd of society also, that saying of the scriptures is too true; *men love darkness better than the light*.—And since the light of our religion gives pain to passion, (for truth is always displeasing to passion) what wonder that men should shut their eyes to its sacred beam? The eye naturally closes, when the light, which falls upon it gives it pain. Another reason why the protestant rejects our religion, even in the case where he does affect to study it, is, because his method of studying it is erroneous. He studies it in protestant writers, who misrepresent and vilify it; and condemns catholic writers, who alone represent it faithfully. How, studying it in such mediums, is it possible, that he should not despise it? As well might we sup-

pose, that the man who had swallowed poison, should not be poisoned, if he refused to take an antidote.

There are many other causes why, in the protestant world in general, the protestant is ignorant of our religion; and being ignorant of it, rejects it. Example, prejudice, education, human respect, the senses, the imagination, the passions, the nursery, the college, the press, the pulpit,—these are, all of them, in protestant countries, the enemies of catholicity, which often stay wisdom itself from its investigation. Neither need I add,—although this is another cause which withholds the protestant from the study of our religion,—that in nations like this, it has no livings to invite the believer to its society; no pensions to reward him; no honors to allure him; no worldly advantages—the great springs of human actions—to attract him. Alas! so far from all this;—it is reviled, frowned upon, persecuted.—Add these circumstances together, and you have a demonstration of the facility, with which the protestant may either *not see* the evidences, which mark the divinity of our holy church; may shut his eyes to their light, or reject them.

Should there be, therefore, in this assembly, any wise and consistent protestant,—any protestant, who wishing to know the truth, is engaged in its discovery,—let me conclude by saying to him,—that I exhort him, after having armed himself against the influences of passion, prejudice, and partiality, to study the evidences and principles of our religion, seriously:—to

study them, in their proper mediums:---to study them, by the light of their proper attestations. Only, since truth is the daughter of heaven, which the light of heaven points out, since faith is a gift of God, which the grace of God bestows,---let me add, that, to the above precautions, I exhort him likewise, to unite a spirit of prayer and piety,---a spirit of innocence and purity,---a spirit of humility and candor. With these dispositions, joined to the preceding precautions, he will soon discover the divinity of catholicity:---discovering it, he will embrace it: and embracing it, he will find it the principle of security; the nurse of virtue; the basis both of present and of future happiness.



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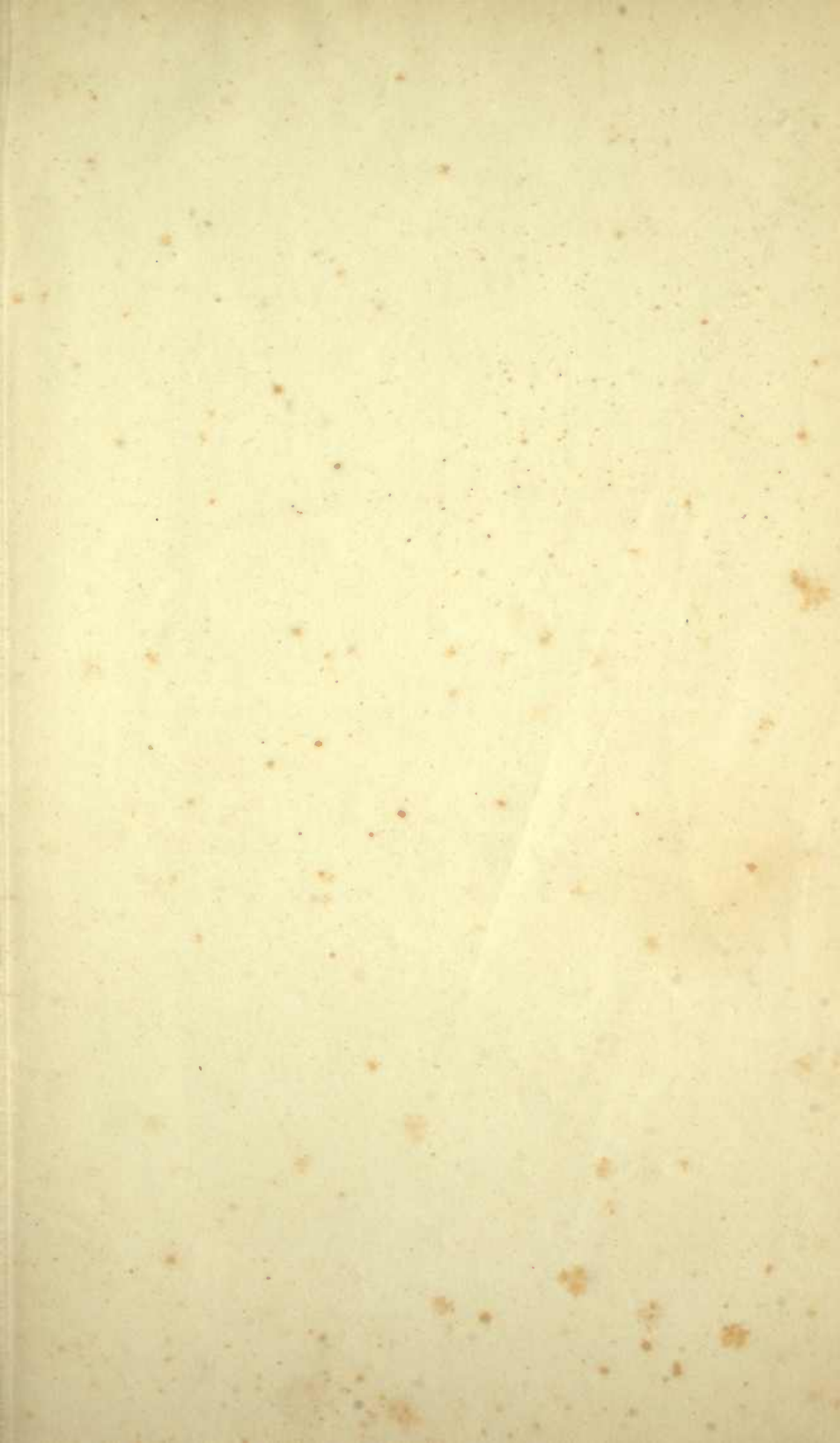
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